AL-GHAZĀLĪ

Kitāb sharḥ ʿajāʾib al-qalb

THE MARVELS OF THE HEART

BOOK 21 of the *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*

THE REVIVAL OF THE RELIGIOUS SCIENCES

TRANSLATED *from the* ARABIC
with an INTRODUCTION *and* NOTES
by WALTER JAMES SKELLIE

with a FOREWORD *by* T. J. WINTER

FONS VITAE



Verily in the remembrance of God
do hearts find tranquility

Qur'ān 13:28

AL-GHAZĀLĪ

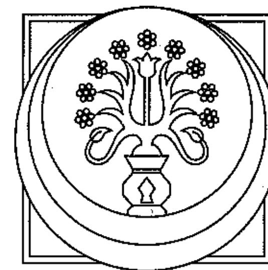
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Contents

Foreword

That the "heart" is the center of all our deeper forms of knowing appears to be a truism in the major world religions. In the Islamic universe, the principle that the Qurʾān itself was revealed not to the Prophet's mind but to his heart (2:97; 26:194) led to a permanent division between merely ratiocinative and inspirational forms of religious knowledge. Islamic civilization came to be characterized by the concurrent flow of two rivers, of rationalist and mystical disciplines of knowledge, and most of the time this coexistence was a peaceful one. Formal systematic theologians (*mutakallimūn*) cultivated their sciences in the world of the exoteric *madrasa*, speculating about a God of supreme otherness (*tanzīh*); while the Sufis met in separate lodges (*khanqāh, tekke, zāwiya, daotang*), encountering, in love, the God who may, in a mysterious way, be likened (*tashbīh*) to what we know.

The greatest thinkers of the civilization were often those who theorized about this tension, and sought to produce a universal theology of Islam that could reconcile *tanzīh* with *tashbīh*. This required mastery of all the relevant disciplines, including the legacy of the Greeks as it had been selectively integrated into Islamic thought. The Greeks had themselves faced an analogous tension, which was to some extent reflected by the Aristotelian and Platonic traditions. By the time their culture was assimilated by the Muslims, complex Neoplatonic schemes had attempted, and in some measure achieved, a concord; but it fell to the Muslims to reconcile this late Hellenistic system with the givens of revealed monotheism. With its focus on the undifferentiated One, Islam was, in an important way, more hospitable to the Greek legacy than was trinitarian Christianity, and its

> illustrations of which he makes use in his rule for the religious life .... The foundations of that great system of orthodox Islamic mysticism which al-Ghazālī made it his business to bring to completion, had already been well and truly laid.[7]

But Ghazālī did more than merely cite quotations from these sources; he wove them into a harmonious system based upon his own experience of gaining and realizing reality. His whole moral philosophy was a synthesis and a practical expression of the golden mean. He took the rigid framework of the scholastic theologian and clothed it with the warm personal faith of the mystic. To the knowledge of the philosopher, gained through the processes of study, reasoning, and deduction, he added the inner knowledge of the Sufi who sees with the light of certainty, and experiences direct revelations and unveilings of the divine Reality. He was careful, however, to avoid the vagaries of extreme Sufism and especially its tendencies to antinomianism and pantheism. He united the best results of philosophic speculation with Islam, and, while denying the materialism of the philosophers, he nevertheless used their methods to develop his own thought and to refute them where they differed with the teachings of Islam.

Ghazālī put great emphasis upon man's need for spiritual leaders, and his *Iḥyā'* gives the ethical teachings of a kindly shepherd who cares for his flock. He was considerate and humane in his dealings with men in general, and, although he was criticized by some, he was slow to refute those who disagreed with him. Even when he did engage the philosophers, his chief concern was to point out the errors of their system of thought and teaching, rather than to denounce them personally.

A Sketch of Ghazālī's Psychology

Introduction

The fact that Ghazālī uses the term "heart" instead of soul in the title of this book is an indication of the primary position this word had in the vocabulary of Muslim religious teachers, and also in that of the philosophers. The term was used in Islam for the seat of intellectual and emotional life even as it had already been used by Judaism and Christianity. Among the Greeks and Romans, the heart took the place of the liver as the seat of life, soul, intellect, and emotion.[8] Aristotle gave the heart the place of honor as the seat of the noblest emotions.[9]

Although Ghazālī uses the term 'secrets' of the heart as a synonym for its 'marvels,' it apparently does not connote any special mystical signification, though it has such a meaning in Sufi usage. The heart is the seat of secrets.[10]

Ghazālī limits the discussion of the subject largely to the field of knowledge of proper conduct (*'ilm al-mu'āmala*). His aim is ethical, and, although he does, sometimes, inevitably deal with questions of metaphysics, it is nevertheless with ethics that he is primarily concerned. He would not go as far as Zeno and reduce all virtues to practical wisdom (*phronēis*),[11] yet that was, for him, the important way of achieving his desired end, the good life.[12] He agreed with Aristotle that understanding included both wisdom (*sophia*) and practical sense (*phronēis*);[13] but what he stressed was the latter, which they both held to be "practical ability, under rational direction, in the choice of things good and avoidance of things which are evil for man."[14] This practical end was kept ever in view by Ghazālī as the logical outcome of man's knowledge and experience.

The Nature of the Soul

In order to understand clearly Ghazālī's concept of the nature of the heart, or soul, it is necessary to discuss four terms that are applied to it. They are: 'heart' (*qalb*); 'spirit' (*rūḥ*); 'soul' (*nafs*); and 'intelligence' (*'aql*). Each of these terms has two meanings, but the second meaning of each term is the same as the second meaning of each of the other three terms.

7 Margaret Smith, "The Forerunner of al-Ghazzālī," *JRAS* (January 1936), pp. 65–76.

8 *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. James Hastings, 13 vols. (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1908–27), 6:557.

9 George Sidney Brett, *A History of Psychology*, 3 vols. (London: Allen and Unwin, 1912–21), 1:106; *Aristotle*, ed. W. D. Ross (London, 1923), p. 143n1.

10 Muḥammad A'lā b. 'Alī Tahānawī, *Kitāb kashshāf iṣṭilāḥāt al-funūn*, trans. as *Dictionary of the Technical Terms used in the Sciences of the Musulmans*, 2 vols. (Calcutta, 1862), p. 653.

11 Friedrich Ueberweg, *A History of Philosophy*, 2 vols. (New York: Scribners, 1901), 1:200.

12 *Aristotle*, ed. G. R. G. Mure (New York, 1932), p. 129.

13 Brett, *Psychology*, 1:144.

14 Ueberweg, *Philosophy*, 1:176.

The term 'heart' (*qalb*) means the heart of flesh in the body of a man or animal, whether living or dead; but it also means that subtle tenuous substance, spiritual in nature, which is the knowing and perceiving essence of man. There is some connection between the physical heart and this spiritual 'heart,' but practical wisdom and prophetic precedent do not demand nor warrant the explanation of this relationship.

'Spirit' (*rūḥ*) means that refined material substance which is produced by the blood in the left cavity of the heart and which rises up to the brain and passes to all parts of the body through the blood vessels carrying the animal powers of life and sense perception.[15] This resembles Aristotle's theory of the *pneuma* as a "sentient organism of a subtle nature spread through the body and acting as the universal medium of sensation."[16] 'Spirit' also means the above-mentioned subtle spiritual substance which is the second meaning of 'heart.'

The third term is 'soul' (*nafs*). This may mean the life-giving soul whose seat is in the heart.[17] Jurjānī defines *nafs* as "that refined vaporous substance (*jawhar*) which bears the powers of life, sense perception, and voluntary motion," and says that al-Ḥakīm (Ibn Sīnā) called it the animal spirit (*al-rūḥ al-ḥayawaniyya*). Ghazālī and other Sufi writers commonly bring the word *nafs*, which is the ordinary Arabic equivalent for the *psychē* of Greek philosophy, down to the appetitive soul (*epithymia*), in which are united man's blameworthy qualities. This is the *psychē* of Pauline theology and the *nephesh* of Hebrew. It is not clear from this book of the *Iḥyā'*, nor from his *Maʿārij al-quds fī madārij maʿrifat al-nafs*, or *al-Risāla al-ladunniyya*, or *Kīmiyā' al-saʿāda*, whether or not Ghazālī held that the 'soul' in this sense was material or immaterial in its nature. Some hints of a material soul are found, for example in *Kīmiyā' al-saʿāda*,[18] where he speaks of the *nafs* as the vehicle (*markab*) of the heart, a term usually applied to the body; and again in *al-Risāla al-ladunniyya*[19] where he says that Sufis call the animal spirit (*al-rūḥ al-ḥayawānī*) a *nafs*. The clearest hint is perhaps that in *Mīzān al-ʿamal*,[20] where he speaks of the two meanings of the soul

15 Murtaḍa al-Zabīdī, *Itḥāf al-sāda al-muttaqīn*, 10 vols. (Cairo: Būlāq, 1311/1893), 7:203; see note on page 7.

16 Brett, *Psychology*, 1:119.

17 Hastings, *Religion and Ethics*, 1:679b.

18 Ghazālī, *Kīmiyā' al-saʿāda* (Cairo: Saʿāda Press, 1343), pp. 8, 10.

19 Ibid., p. 27.

20 Ibid., pp. 18, 20.

as the animal soul (*al-nafs al-ḥayawāniyya*) and the human soul (*al-nafs al-insāniyya*). It is clear that there is in Islam the concept of a material *nafs*.[21] But Ghazālī does not stress the nature of this appetitive soul as regards its materiality or immateriality, but rather as regards its characteristic of uniting the blameworthy qualities of man. These blameworthy qualities are the animal powers in man that are opposed to his rational powers.[22] It is thus, like Plato's irrational soul, made up of anger (*ghaḍab, thymos*) and appetence (*shahwa, epithymia*).

The second meaning of *nafs* is that subtle spiritual substance which is the real essence of man.

The fourth term is 'intelligence' or 'reason' (*ʿaql*). This word is commonly used to translate the Greek *nous*. *ʿAql* is applied to man's knowledge of the true nature of things, and also to his power to perceive and know. This latter meaning is that same subtle spiritual substance of which Aristotle said, "Reason, more than anything else, is man."[23]

It is this second meaning, common to all four terms, of which al-Ghazālī writes in the volume before us. Thus his concept of 'heart,' or 'soul,' may be defined as that subtle tenuous substance, spiritual in nature, which is the perceiving and knowing essence of man, and in reality is man. Its seat is the physical heart. It is immaterial and immortal. It is created directly by God, capable of knowing Him, and is morally responsible to Him.

Ghazālī, following Ibn Sīnā and other Arab philosophers, conceived of the human soul as being between the lower realm of the animal and the higher realm of the divine, and as partaking of the characteristics of each of these realms.[24] In the elaboration of their doctrine of the soul they combined the ideas of Plato and Aristotle, and joined to them additional ideas from Neoplatonic sources. Perhaps the most systematic statement of the resulting doctrine of the soul is that given by Ibn Sīnā, which may be summarized in the following scheme, as adapted from Hastings, *Encyclo-*

21 Macdonald, "The Development of the Idea of Spirit in Islam," *Acta Orientalia* 9 (1931), reprinted in *Moslem World* 22 (1932), pp. 25–46. ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Jurjānī, *Kitāb al-taʿrīfāt*, ed. Gustav Flügel (Leipzig: Sumptibus F. C. G. Vogelii, 1845), pp. 1396ff.

22 Ghazālī, *Maʿārij al-quds* (Cairo 1346/1927), p. 11.

23 *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1177 b 26–78 a 7, in *Aristotle*, ed. Mure, p. 165.

24 Brett, *Psychology*, 2:484; Plotinus, *The Essence of Plotinus*, based on the translation of Stephen Mackenna (New York: Oxford University Press, 1934), III, ii, 8.

paedia of Religion and Ethics.[25] [The soul is divided into three: vegetative, animal, and human (rational) soul.] Each one of these divisions is further subdivided as follows:

Vegetative Soul	Powers of nutrition		
	Powers of growth		
	Powers of reproduction		
Animal Soul	Motive faculties	Appetitive power	attractive power (concupiscence)
			repulsive power (irascibility and passion)
		Efficient power	in motor nerves and muscles
	Perceptive faculties	External	sight hearing smell taste touch
		Internal	common sense formative faculty cognitive faculty estimative faculty memory
Human or Rational Soul	Active Intelligence (practical reason)		
	Speculative Intelligence (theoretical reason) perceives ideas by		material intellect or potentiality of knowledge
			intellect of possession recognizes axiomatic knowledge
			perfected intellect lays hold on intelligibles

This system was adopted in large part by Ghazālī, and it formed the framework of his philosophy of mind.

25 *Religion and Ethics*, 2:274ff. Cf. Brett, *Psychology*, 2:54ff.; Mu'tazid Weliur-Rahman, "The Psychology of Ibn-i-Sina," *Islamic Culture* 9, no. 2 (April 1935), pp. 341ff.

In analyzing the above scheme as developed by Ghazālī in this book we find ideas corresponding to the Platonic thought of the rational and irrational souls.[26] The rational soul, according to Plato, was created by God and placed in the head, but the irrational part was the creation of the *demiourgoi*. Its nobler part is anger, or the spirited, irascible nature (*thymos*), and has its seat in the heart or thorax; while the base part, which is appetence, or the concupiscible nature (*epithymia*), has its seat in the abdominal cavity.

For Ghazālī, of course, God is the Creator of all that man is and does, and he follows Aristotle in holding that the heart is the seat of the rational soul. But, in spite of these differences, the Platonic division is an important part of the thinking of Ghazālī.[27] Plato's 'rational soul' is Ghazālī's 'soul,' or 'heart,' or 'intellect,' depending on the illustrations he uses. The irrational soul of Plato includes the powers of appetence and anger which, for him and for Ghazālī too, must be held in check by the rational soul or intellect. When the intellect dominates these lower powers, justice is established for both soul and body, but when the lower powers dominate the intellect, it becomes their slave. The excellence or virtue of the rational soul is wisdom, that of anger is courage, and that of appetence is temperance.[28]

Even more clearly do we see the Aristotelian analysis in Ghazālī's psychology with its vegetative, animal, and human 'souls.'[29] Aristotle tried to explain accurately the phenomena of psychic life, approaching it from the side of metaphysics.[30] All known things are included in an ascending scale from pure matter to pure form. The body alone is matter, and the soul alone is form. The sphere of psychology is the relationship of the two (*to empsychon*). Soul and body must be defined in relation to each other. The soul is the true essence of that which we call body, and is man in reality. It is the first actualization (*entelechy*) of the body, and represents a possibility of psychic activity. The second entelechy is the actual realization of this possibility. This is illustrated in the eye that has the power to see

26 Brett, *Psychology*, 1:68; Plato, *Timaeus*, trans. R. G. Bury (London: Loeb Classical Library, 1929), 44 E, 69 E, 70 B D E. Cf. Aristotle, *De Anima*, trans. W. S. Hett (London: W. Heinemann, 1935), I, i; III, ix; Plotinus, *Essence*, IV, viii, 5–8.

27 Cf. note on page 7.

28 Brett, *Psychology*, 1:97.

29 Aristotle, *De Anima*, II, i; III, ix; *Aristotle*, ed. Mure, pp. 95ff. Cf. Plotinus, *Essence*, III, iv, 2. See note on page 25.

30 Brett, *Psychology*, 1:100ff.

even when that power is inactive, as in sleep; and the eye that is actually seeing. Ghazālī holds quite a similar position, and gives the same illustration of powers, potential and actual.

Man's power of reaction is threefold: He absorbs nourishment and reproduces, as does the plant. He has sense perceptions, powers of discrimination, and voluntary movement like the animal. He differs from them both in possessing rational power, and is capable of that higher knowledge that includes the knowledge of God. By virtue of this quality of experiential knowledge, man occupies a place between the animals and the angels. "There are in him the desires of the beast united with a reason that is godlike."[31] By neglecting the rational soul he can sink toward the level of the animal, and by cultivating it he can strive toward the level of the angels.

The Soul's Knowledge and Its Acquisition

According to the Neoplatonic idea of man, "Knowledge is always an activity of the soul."[32] Through this activity man gains a firm and lasting grasp of reality. Ghazālī held that man's peculiar glory is the aptitude which he has for that highest of all kinds of knowledge, the knowledge of God. In this knowledge is man's joy and happiness. The seat of this knowledge is the heart, which was created to know Him, just as the eye was created to see objective forms. The physical members are used by the heart to attain the end of knowledge even as the craftsman uses his tool to accomplish his purposes. Man's potential capacity for knowledge is practically unlimited, that is, save by infinity itself.

Although knowledge may, to a certain degree, be the result of man's activity, yet it requires a cause outside of man himself to bestow true wisdom. Plato found this outside cause in the world of Ideas. Aristotle said that intelligence (*nous*) comes into man "from without as something divine and immortal."[33] Intelligence is not a mere function of the natural body. "Knowledge seemed to the Arab to be an eternal and abiding reality, ... which for a time reproduced itself in the individual."[34]

31 Ibid., 1:137.

32 Ibid., 1:305.

33 Ueberweg, *Philosophy,* 1:168. Cf. Brett, *Psychology,* 1:153ff.

34 Brett, *Psychology,* 2:51.

Man is potentially capable of knowledge because of the principle that like can know like.[35] The old Greek idea of man as a microcosm[36] is accepted by Ghazālī, who said, "were it not that He has placed an image of the whole world within your very being you would have no knowledge of that which is apart from yourself."[37] He further develops this idea in *Kīmiyāʾ al-saʿāda*.

> Know that man is an epitome (*mukhtaṣara*) of the world in which there is a trace of every form in the world. For these bones are like the mountains, his flesh as the dust, his hair as the plants, his head as heaven, his senses as the planets.... The power in the stomach is like the cook, that in the liver like the baker, that in the intestines like the fuller, and that which makes milk white and blood red is like the dyer.[38]

In man there are many worlds represented, all of which serve him tirelessly although he does not know of them nor give thanks to Him who bestowed them upon him.

Ghazālī also considers the platonic idea of man being the copy of the archetype.[39] He connects this with the Muslim doctrine of the Preserved Tablet (*al-lawḥ al-maḥfūẓ*).[40] The Archetype of the world was written on the Tablet. The real nature of things is made known to man by disclosure to him of what is there written through the reflection of these truths in the mirror of the heart.

This introduces us to the example of the mirror[41]—a favorite of Ghazālī's. Man's heart, as a mirror, is potentially capable of having reflected in it the real essence of all things, and thus of coming to know them. In this knowledge there are three factors: (1) The intellect, or heart, in which exists the image of the specific natures of things, is like the mirror; (2) The intelligible, or specific nature of the known thing, is like the object reflected in

35 Plato, *Timaeus*, 37 B C; see introduction, p. 10.

36 See note on page 59.

37 See page 59, where this is translated.

38 Ghazālī, *Kīmiyāʾ*, p. 19.

39 Plato, *Timaeus*, 37 D E; translation, p. 79. Cf. Plotinus, *Essence*, III, viii, 10; V, i, 4; VI, vii, 15.

40 See "al-lawḥ al-maḥfūẓ," *EI*, 3:19ff.; *EI*², "lawḥ," 5:698. Also Wensinck, *Gazālī's Cosmology*, pp. 16ff.

41 Cf. Plotinus, *Essence*, I, i, 8.

the mirror; (3) The intelligence, or the representation of the known thing in the heart, is like the representation of the image in the mirror.

The reflection of knowledge in the heart may be prevented by one or more of five causes: (1) The heart of a youth is in a crude unformed condition and is incapable of knowledge, just as a crude unpolished piece of metal is incapable of reflecting objects; (2) Disobedient acts tarnish and corrode the mirror of the heart so that the reflection of reality therein is dimmed or destroyed; (3) Man may not know God because his heart is not turned toward Him: even as the mirror does not reflect the desired object unless it is turned toward it; (4) The heart may be veiled to true knowledge by blindly accepting dogmatic teaching without understanding or thought; (5) The heart may not even know in which direction to turn in order to have reality reflected in it.

Man can polish and burnish the mirror of his heart by means of acts of obedience so that it will reflect the image of true reality. He thus gains knowledge by making it possible for the image of the archetype to be reflected in his heart.

The sum total of man's knowledge is thus rooted in his knowledge of himself. He knows only himself in the proper sense, and knows other things only through himself. This is true also of man's highest attainment of knowledge, the knowledge of God; for the quality of the divine Being is reflected in the human soul. "He who knows himself knows his Lord" is the true statement of tradition. Every heart is thus a microcosm and a mirror, and being thus constituted is capable of knowing itself and the divine.[42]

The heart of man has two kinds of knowledge: intellectual and religious. Intellectual knowledge may be the intuitive knowledge of axioms, or acquired knowledge that is the result of study. Acquired knowledge may deal with the things of this world, such as medicine, geometry, astronomy, and the various professions and trades; or it may be concerned with the things of the world to come, such as the doctrines of religion. Speculative theologians stress this sort of acquired knowledge as being most important.

Religious knowledge is the knowledge of God, His attributes, and His acts. It is accepted on authority by the common people as an unquestionable creed that does not involve direct inspiration. To people of deep religious experience, however, this knowledge is given directly. Saints and

42 Cf. development of microcosm and macrocosm in Wilhelm Windelband, *A History of Philosophy*, trans. James Tufts (New York: Macmillan, 1907), pp. 366ff.

mystics receive it through general inspiration (*ilhām*), while it is received by prophets directly from the angel[43] through prophetic inspiration (*waḥy*).

Both intellectual and religious knowledge are needed and neither one is sufficient without the other. This is true in spite of the fact that each tends to exclude the other except in the case of unusual men who are both learned and saintly. Intellectual knowledge may be compared to food, and religious knowledge to medicine. Both are needed for the preservation of health.

Even as there are two kinds of knowledge which enter the heart, so also the heart has two doors by which this knowledge comes into it.[44] There is an outer door to the knowledge of material things and this is sense perception. The inner door is that of divine inspiration and mystical revelation.[45] Here again the principle obtains that like knows like, for the senses belong to this present world for which they were created, while the heart belongs also to the invisible world of spirits (*al-malakūt*).

The external senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch act through the bodily members: the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and fingers. Sense perceptions reach the individual by means of these external senses, but they are perceived and understood only by means of the five inner senses which are (1) shared sense or sensus communis (*ḥiss mushtarak*), (2) retentive imagination (*khayāl, takhayyul*), (3) reflection (*tafakkur*), (4) recollection (*tadhakkur*), and (5) memory (*ḥifẓ*). These are internal powers and their seats are internal.

The shared sense is the power that receives the impressions which come through the different external senses and unites them into a harmonious and unified whole. Retentive imagination is the power that takes from the shared sense the physical sensation and transforms it into a psychic possession. This power is located in the front part of the brain. Reflection is the pondering, cogitative faculty of the heart. Recollection is the power to recall the mental images of past sensations that have been forgotten for a time. Memory is the storehouse for the meanings of sensible objects formerly perceived. Its seat is in the back part of the brain.

43 Editor's note: this refers to the Angel Gabriel, who delivered revelation to the prophets.

44 Tahānawī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-funūn*, p. 371; M. Palacios, *Algazel, Dogmática, Moral, Ascética* (Zaragoza, 1901), pp. 79f.

45 Cf. Plotinus, *Essence*, V, i, 12; III, viii, 9.

This list of the internal senses differs from some of Ghazālī's other classifications. Five other lists are presented in tabular form. [See following tables.] In this book Ghazālī deals with practical and ethical ends, and perhaps did not feel that it was necessary to be scientifically accurate in his statement. It will be noted that the classifications given in the first four of the books as tabulated below are definite attempts to present the subject systematically.

	Maqāṣid al-falāsifa	*Tahāfut al-falāsifa*	*Mīzān al-ʿamal*
1	Common sense *ḥiss mushtarak*	Common sense; imagination *ḥiss mushtarak; khayāliyya*	Common sense; imagination *ḥiss mushtarak; khayāliyya* anterior ventricle of brain
2	Retentive imagination; conservation *mutaṣawwira; ḥāfiẓa* anterior ventricle	Retentive imagination *ḥāfiẓa*	Retentive imagination *ḥāfiẓa* anterior ventricle
3	Estimation *wahmiyya* posterior ventricle	Estimation *wahmiyya* posterior ventricle	Estimation *wahmiyya* end of middle ventricle
4	Compositive animal and human imagination *mutakhayyila mufakkira* middle ventricle	Compositive animal and human imagination *mutakhayyila mufakkira* middle ventricle	Compositive animal and human imagination *mutakhayyila mufakkira* middle ventricle
5	Memory *dhākira* posterior ventricle	Memory *dhākira* posterior ventricle	Memory *dhākira* posterior ventricle

	Maʿārij al-quds	*Kīmiyāʾ al-saʿāda*	*Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*
1	Common sense; phantasia; tablet *ḥiss mushtarak; binṭāsiyya; lawḥ* front of anterior ventricle	Imagination *khayāl*	Common sense *ḥiss mushtarak*
2	Retentive imagination *khayāl; khayāliyya muṣawwira* back of anterior ventricle	Estimation *wahm*	Retentive imagination *khayāl; takhayyul* anterior ventricle
3	Estimation (*wahmiyya*) whole of brain, esp. back of middle ventricle	Reflection *tafakkur*	Reflection *tafakkur*
4	Compositive imagination, animal and human *takhayyul; mutakhayyila; mufakkira* front of middle ventricle	Recollection *tadhakkur*	Recollection *tadhakkur*
5	Memory (*ḥāfiẓa; dhākira*) posterior ventricle	Memory *ḥifẓ*	Memory *ḥifẓ* posterior ventricle

It would be of added interest if we could know for certain the chronological order of these books. It appears to be quite safe to put the *Maqāṣid* and *Tahāfut* first. *Mīzān al-ʿamal* is placed third because it seems logically nearer to the first two than does *Maʿārij al-quds fī madārij maʿrifat al-nafs* (also known as *Maʿārij al-sālikīn*).[46]

The analyses given in the *Mīzān* and *Maʿārij* are particularly noteworthy for being systematic and detailed in form, and as coming from the

46 Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der Arabischer Litteratur, Supplementband*, 3 vols. (1936–7), 1:751.

later period of Ghazālī's life. The list from *Kīmiyā᾽ al-saʿāda* is given as an interesting parallel to that in this book of the *Iḥyā᾽*.

Another interesting parallel is found in *al-Risāla al-ladunniyya*,[47] where Ghazālī speaks of the soul's activities as recollection (*tadhakkur*), memorizing (*taḥaffuẓ*), reflection (*tafakkur*), discrimination (*tamyīz*), and deliberation (*rawiyya*). But it is evident that this also is not an attempt at a systematic analysis.

In his *Maʿārij*[48] Ghazālī gives a suggestion regarding the inner senses which enables us to understand more clearly their varying names and functions. He says that they include: (1) that which perceives but does not conserve; (2) that which conserves but does not reason; and (3) that which perceives (understands) and deals with perceptions. These three powers in their relation to the forms of sense impressions and to their ideal meanings place before us the entire range of the internal senses. These relationships are shown in the following table.

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="2">That which perceives (al-mudrik)</td><td>the form received through sense impression (lil-ṣūra) is</td><td colspan="2">common sense (ḥiss mushtarak)</td></tr>
<tr><td>the ideal meaning (lil-maʿnā) is</td><td colspan="2">the estimative faculty (wahm; wahmiyya)</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">That which conserves (al-ḥāfiẓ)</td><td>the form received through sense impression (lil-ṣūra) is</td><td colspan="2">retentive imagination (al-khayāl; al-ḥāfiẓa)</td></tr>
<tr><td>the ideal meaning (lil-maʿnā) is</td><td colspan="2">memory; recollection (al-ḥāfiẓa; al-dhākira)</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">That which deals with (al-mutaṣarrif fī)</td><td>the form received through sense impression (al-ṣūra) is</td><td rowspan="2">compositive imagination</td><td>of human intellect (mufakkira)</td></tr>
<tr><td>the ideal meaning (lil-maʿnā) is</td><td>of animal powers (mutakhayyila)</td></tr>
</table>

47 Published with Ghazālī, *Kīmiyā᾽ al-saʿāda* (Cairo: Saʿāda Press, 1343), p. 27.

48 Ghazālī, *Maʿārij*, p. 46.

From this arrangement it is also easy to see how these functions are sometines combined and other times separated in the different classifications, and also how the terms may easily vary in their meanings in the different books.

From the foregoing discussion we see that Ghazālī was respectful of Aristotle, Galen, and the later philosophers of the Aristotelian school in his ideas of the body and sense perceptions, both outer and inner. We shall now see that in the realm of intuition, mystic revelation, and ecstasy there is a more pronounced Sufi trend in his thought, and this involves elements from Neoplatonic sources.[49]

Turning then to the inner door of the heart we find Ghazālī's second source of knowledge in divine inspiration and mystical revelation. The experience of this sort of knowledge is given to only a few people, but everyone is obligated to believe in its reality. It is attested by the Qur᾽ān, by *ḥadīth*, and by many experiences and stories of the saints. Revelation does not differ from acquisition with regard to the knowledge itself, its seat, and its cause, but only in the removal of the veil which does not come about by man's volition. Mystical revelation comes to him whose heart is prepared to receive it, either through the medium of dream-vision during sleep, or, more rarely, in a vision seen during waking hours.[50]

In the case of the prophets, inspiration (*waḥy*) is accompanied by a vision of the angel who imparts knowledge. The inspiration (*ilhām*) of saints differs from it, in that there is no such vision of the angel that brings the knowledge. Ghazālī is not quite consistent in his statements of the part which the angel plays in imparting the knowledge given through revelation. His position seems to be that general inspiration (*ilhām*) is always the result of angelic activity, even though the angel does not appear to the recipient of the revelation. He goes so far as to say that "our hearts attain knowledge only by means of the angels."[51] But in another place he speaks of directly given divine knowledge (*ʿilm ladunnī*) apart from the usual means from without. In *al-Risāla al-ladunniyya* (p. 42) he says that *ʿilm ladunnī* is from the Creator directly, with no mediating agent. This inconsistency is probably explained by his ideas about involuntary suggestions (*khawāṭir*), which will be dealt with later. The mediated knowledge corresponds to the suggestion of the angel (*al-khāṭir al-malakī*), while

49 Cf. Brett, *Psychology*, 1:200ff.; 2:48.

50 Cf. *The Hebrew Tradition* in Brett, *Psychology*, 2:233ff.

51 Translation, page 53.

the immediate and direct knowledge corresponds to the suggestion of the Lord (*al-khāṭir al-rabbānī*).

Through divine inspiration the true nature of reality is revealed to the heart of man. The veils of sense are drawn aside by divine power, and man's heart can perceive, even if it is but for a moment, the truth of the eternal reflected from the Preserved Tablet which is in the world of the unseen. At death the veils of sense are removed entirely and reality is clearly seen by the heart.

Man must prepare his heart to receive this gift of divine unveiling. He can do this by cutting off all earthly ties and making the thought of God not only supreme in every part of his being, but the sole idea which occupies his heart and mind. This is done by withdrawing from the world and engaging in the devotional exercise of *dhikr*, in addition to the prescribed worship. He continues repeating the name of God, with his mind fixed on Him, until the motion of the tongue ceases and the word seems to be flowing over it. He continues until every trace of the word and of its form and letters and appearance is effaced from his heart and nothing remains save its ideal meaning. All dualism is removed. The heart loses all consciousness of anything other than God, and in its contemplation of Him reaches the highest possible state.[52] Man is then prepared to receive the gift of divine unveiling. He had done all that he can do for he has reached the state of ecstasy. God then bestows such gifts as He pleases.

Such are the two ways that man receives knowledge and the two types of knowledge that he may have. Both intellectual and religious knowledge were important to Ghazālī. Both acquired and revealed knowledge played a large part in his scheme of life. He himself was a learned man, and he could never cease to give learning a place of honor and to account it a factor of great importance in human life and experience. But even his learning had not saved him from falling into skepticism, leading to a crisis in his life, while in the experience of mystical revelation he had found certainty and peace. The two factors are strangely intermingled in his writings. At one moment he seems to show his frustration with the common man, who does not have the intellectual power to comprehend knowledge; and at another time we find him praising an almost illiterate saint because of the miraculous gifts (*karāmāt*) and divinely unveiled knowledge that has been revealed to him. Intellectual knowledge is great, but even it must

52 Cf. Brett, *Psychology*, 1:313, 2:43; Plotinus, *Essence*, VI, vii, 34.

bow before that which is manifestly a divine bestowment. This Ghazālī knew from experience.

The Relation of Soul to Body and of Thought to Act

The relation of the soul to the body has already been touched upon in the discussion of the nature of the soul. Plato said that the soul was imprisoned in the body, while Aristotle made it an entelechy or actualization. Both of these ideas are considered in Ghazālī's thought. But the metaphor that Ghazālī chooses to express this relationship appears to come from Plato's *Timaeus*,[53] where the body is spoken of as the vehicle of the soul. Plato's word is *ὄχημα*; Ghazālī's is *markab*.

For Ghazālī, as for Ibn Sīnā, the soul is "a separate independent reality, which is only united to the body accidentally, that is to say, without any relation which affects its essence."[54] Both the vegetal and animal powers "are made possible by the union of the soul with the body; but if we go beyond these we come to other activities which belong to the soul itself."[55] Such soul activity is first of all potential, then nascent, then developed. This is illustrated by a youth who is at first potentially capable of learning to write. Then he comes to know the inkstand, pen, and the letters in their separate forms. And finally he becomes skilled in writing and composition.

The heart is the center for both the psychic and physical actions of man and thus in it are to be found the threads which bind thought to act.[56] The question of moral qualities and responsibilities as related to the soul's activity and the resultant physical action will be dealt with in the following section of this sketch. The first link in the chain connecting the psychic and the physical is the involuntary suggestion (*khāṭir*) which comes to the heart. This is of such importance in Ghazālī's scheme that it must be examined in some detail.

The *khāṭir* (pl. *khawāṭir*), (also *khaṭra*, pl. *khaṭarāt*), is an opinion, idea, or object of thought bestirring itself in the mind.[57] It is the allocution or suggestion that comes to the heart of man; man himself has noth-

53 Plato, *Timaeus* 44 E; 69 C.

54 Brett, *Psychology*, 2:57.

55 Ibid.

56 Ibid., 1:141ff.

57 E. W. Lane, *Arabic–English Lexicon* (London, 1863–93), p. 765.

ing to do with its coming.[58] This term is used largely in Sufi writings, and especially by Ghazālī.

There are various divisions of the *khawāṭir*, the most common being fourfold. (1) The suggestion of the Lord (of the Absolute Reality), (*al-khāṭir al-rabbānī; al-ḥaqqānī*). It is that which is cast directly into the heart of mystics who dwell, as it were, in His Presence. Nothing can oppose it, but the other sorts of *khawāṭir* fade away and disappear before it. To deny it vexes the soul. It is a warning and a sign for guidance. (2) The suggestion of the angel (*al-khāṭir al-malakī*) exhorts to obedience and good acts, and warns against acts of disobedience and things that are disapproved. It blames man for committing acts contrary to divine law and for being slow in doing that which is in agreement therewith. (3) The suggestion of the self (*al-khāṭir al-nafsī*) demands the pleasant favors of this swiftly passing world, and sets forth its invitations to vanity. It is not cut off by the light of the devotional practice of the remembrance of God but continues to demand its desire, unless it comes to enjoy divinely given success (*tawfīq*), in which case its demands are uprooted. (4) The suggestion of the demon (*al-khāṭir al-shayṭānī*). This is the suggestion of the enemy who summons to acts of disobedience and to things that are forbidden and disapproved.

Some say that all *khawāṭir* are from the angels, and may be approved or disapproved by the individual. An exception to this is the suggestion of Absolute Reality with which man never disagrees. By the light of the divine unity (*al-tawḥīd*) man receives the suggestion of God, and by the light of experiential knowledge the suggestion of the angel. By the light of faith an end is put to the suggestion of the self, and by the light of Islam it is restored to obedience.

All types of suggestions come ultimately from God, but some come directly, and others indirectly. Those which come from Him directly, and those which come through the angel, are good. The commentator on *al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya* says that the suggestion of the Lord is equivalent to true insight (*firāsa*) and is a miraculous gift (*karāma*). The suggestions that come from the self may be either good or evil, although the latter is to be expected. The suggestion that comes from the demon is always evil. Some have added to the foregoing division the following: the suggestion of the spirit (*khāṭir al-rūḥ*); the suggestion of the shaykh (*khāṭir al-shaykh*); the suggestion of the intellect (*khāṭir al-ʿaql*); and the suggestion of certainty (*khāṭir al-yaqīn*). But all of these can be properly placed under the fourfold division already given.

58 Cf. Jurjānī, *al-Taʿrīfāt*, p. 101.

The correct differentiation of these suggestions and their sources can be made only when the mirror of the heart is carefully cleared of all undue fleshly and natural desires by means of asceticism, piety, and remembrance; and then the true nature of the suggestions will be manifest. He who has not reached this stage in the ascetic life should weigh the suggestion in the balances of the divine law to determine its nature. If it is an obligation or a virtue he should do it; but if it is a thing forbidden or disapproved he should put it away from himself. If it is something permitted and rather inclines toward disagreeing with the self, then he should do it; for most of the suggestions of the self are base. Some of the demands of the self are its just rights to things which are necessary, and these must be satisfied. Other demands of the self are for fortune's favors, and these should be denied. He who succeeds in properly recognizing and dealing with these suggestions enters into the way of abundant life and mystic vision, where the suggestions which seek for fortune's favors pass away and trouble man no more.

Sayyid Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī, the commentator on the *Iḥyāʾ*, says that the novice must put away the suggestions of the self, the angel, and the demon, and give the primary place to the suggestion of the Absolute Reality. Ghazālī makes the suggestion of the angel equivalent to general inspiration (*ilhām*), and that of the demon the same as evil prompting (*wiswās*). Sometimes he speaks as though there were but this twofold division, and he refers to these two as 'calls' (*lammatān*).

The sorts of *khawāṭir* found in *Qūt al-qulūb* by Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī, one of Ghazālī's principal source books, are found in a list given by Zabīdī.[59] They are:

1. General inspiration (*ilhām*).
2. Evil prompting (*wiswās*).
3. Dread (*ījās*).
4. Intention (*niyya*).
5. Hope and desire (*amal; umniya*).
6. Recollection and reflection (*tadhakkur; tafakkur*).
7. Mystic vision (*mushāhadan*).
8. Anxious desire (*hamm*).
9. Seizure of madness (*lamam*).

59 Zabīdī, *Itḥāf*, 7:266; Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb* (Cairo: al-Maymaniyya Press, 1310/1893), 1:187ff.

Zabīdī mentions the sixfold division, adding intellect (ʿaql) and certainty (*yaqīn*) to the usual four, but denies that the intellect has a *khāṭir*.[60]

The other states of the heart that lead up to physical action are dealt with quite summarily by Ghazālī. For when a man once gives heed to the suggestion in his heart, the other stages follow almost automatically. Thus the suggestion stirs up the inherent inclination of the nature (*mayl al-ṭabʿ*) to do the thing suggested. Inclination of the nature leads to a conviction (*iʿtiqād*), or a reasoned judgment that the thing must be done. This conviction leads to a definite decision (*hamm*) to do it. Thereupon the physical members act in obedience to the decision and command of the heart, and the act is done.

Ghazālī illustrates the various kinds of suggestions (*khawāṭir*) by many *ḥadīth*s and parables. All of the different stages between suggestion and action are made clear by an illustration of which a brief summary is here given. The suggestion comes into the mind of a man that there is a woman behind him in the way, and that, if he were to turn around, he would see her. The inclination of his nature is then to turn and see her. But his inhibitions of modesty and fear must first be removed before he reaches the stage of conviction that he must turn and look. Next he determines and decides finally to look and see her. This state of the heart is followed by the act of turning and looking, unless some new influence is brought to bear upon the man to prevent the act.

The Soul's Experience of Good and Evil

It has already been stated that Ghazālī's purpose in the *Iḥyāʾ* is primarily ethical. His aim is the enlightenment of the soul in order that it may attain its perfection in the full and immediate knowledge of God. There are potent forces that help man toward this end. But there are also evil tendencies that appeal to his lower nature and constantly drag him down and prevent him from reaching the desired goal. The soul is constantly swaying backwards and forwards between these forces for good and evil. Sometimes the good prevails, and again the evil influence predominates.

60 Sources of above are: Tahānawī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-funūn*, pp. 415–7; Zabīdī, *Itḥāf*, 7:199, 249, 266, 301ff.; ʿAbd al-Karīm b. Hawāzin al-Qushayrī, *al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya* (Egypt: Maṭbʿat Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Halabī, 1940), 2:96; Aḥmad b. Muṣṭafā Kumushkhānawī, *Jāmiʿ al-uṣūl fī al-awliyāʾ* (Egypt: Maṭbaʿat al-Jamāliyya, 1328/1910), p. 100; Reynold A. Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1921), p. 212.

If we ask about the source of these good and evil influences that act upon the soul we find that God is the First Cause of all. Here Ghazālī follows established Sunnī theology. "There is no doer (*fāʿil*) save God. Every existing thing, whether creature or provision, gift or prohibition, life or death, wealth, or poverty, or whatever is called by a name, has been created by God alone."[61] He creates men and what they do.

But although God is the ultimate cause of all suggestions and acts, both good and evil, there are also secondary causes. These are angels and demons. Here again we see the Neoplatonic influence at work providing a parallel in the realm of morals to what the Neoplatonic chain does in metaphysics in putting the Absolute Cause far away from the individual. There are a great many angels[62] and a corresponding host of demons. Each type of good or evil act is the result of the soul's acceptance of the suggestion of a particular angel or demon. A number of demons are mentioned by name and their specific fields of activity mentioned. Thabr is the demon who stirs up strife and affliction. Al-Aʿwar incites to adultery, and Miswaṭ to lying. Dāsim stirs up trouble between a man and his family. Zalanbūr leads to dishonesty in the marketplace. Khinzib interrupts a man during the ritual prayer, and al-Walhān interferes with ceremonial purification.

In this development we find suggestions of Eastern influences, especiallly Persian and Hebrew, in the angelology and demonology, as well as in the apparent dualism.[63] In certain passages Ghazālī seems to say that each individual has a demon and an angel that accompany him in his life. This suggests the 'daemon' of Socrates and Plutarch.[64]

The heart has many doors through which the demons enter in order to lead it astray. All of these are related to the qualities of the irrational soul. Man must know these doors, which are: anger and appetence; envy and greed; overeating; love of adornment; striving to gain the favor of men; haste; love of money; stinginess; sectarianism; the study of theology by the common people; thinking evil of Muslims.

There is but one door, however, by which the angels may gain access to the heart. Ghazālī does not explicitly define this door, but it is clear that he is speaking of the rational soul as illuminated by inner piety and outer conformity to the teachings of the Qurʾān and the Sunna.

61 Zabīdī, *Itḥaf*, 9:400.

62 Cf. the further development in *Iḥyāʾ*, 4:104ff.

63 Cf. Brett, *Psychology*, 1:221.

64 Ibid., 1:62, 258.

Ghazālī is careful also to show that, although good and evil are both inevitably present in man's experience, every individual is responsible for the development of his character. Man must discipline his soul. The book of the *Iḥyā'* that immediately follows this one deals with the subject of this discipline. But in the present book we find the subject constantly stressed. The rational soul must be made and kept the master, while anger and appetence must be kept in the position of servants. The demands of the appetitive and spirited natures must be balanced against each other so that desire and will may all be harmoniously developed into a complete character.[65] But when man habitually yields to the demands of his lower nature, his intellect becomes the slave of his passions and is entirely occupied with schemes to attain the ends of his lower desires. The master has become enslaved, and the soul is overcome by confusion, immorality, and sin.

The discipline of the soul is accomplished through ascetic and devotional practices. This present world and the desire for the things of the world must be denied, and the entrances of Satan may thus be closed. There must be complete dependence upon God and submission to Him. As long as man truly desires any of the things of this world, be it but a stone to use for a pillow, just so long will Satan find in his desire a way to approach his heart and lead it astray.

Ghazālī uses another figure to express the same idea. Satan's food is man's appetence or desire. It therefore becomes man's duty to empty his heart of all desire for worldly things, and thus remove that upon which Satan feeds.

The *dhikr*, or the devotional practice of the remembrance of God and the repeated mention of His name, is the best way to fix the heart's desire upon Him, and so to ward off the attacks of Satan. *Ḥadīth* says that the *dhikr* causes Satan to slink away and hide himself. It is therefore the best means of defense against the evil promptings that Satan suggests to the human heart. It is conceivable that some of Satan's evil promptings may thus be cut off entirely, but for the most part there is no complete victory over Satan in this life. Man may triumph over him for a moment or for an hour by means of pious practices, but he returns to man again and again. Only the prophets, who are preserved from sin (*maʿṣūmūn*), are able to baffle Satan indefinitely. It is therefore essential that man shall maintain a

65 Cf. Brett's dicussion of Aristotle, *Psychology*, 1:142ff.

constant lifelong struggle against Satan, for only thus can he develop his character as he ought to do.

In dealing with man's moral responsibility for his own good and evil acts, Ghazālī lays down one clear rule. Man is held accountable for his own voluntary choices. He will be judged in accordance with the purpose (*qaṣd*) on which he has fixed his heart, his determination (*ʿazm*), his intention (*niyya*), and his decision (*hamm*). When two men engage in a sword fight both slayer and slain will be condemned to the fire, because each one intended to kill the other.

On the other hand, man is not held accountable for the involuntary suggestion (*khāṭir*) that occurs to his mind, nor for the inclination of his nature (*mayl al-ṭabʿ*), since there is no element of volition on his part in either of them. In regard to man's conviction (*iʿtiqād*) that he must do a certain thing, Ghazālī says that this may have been reached involuntarily through circumstances beyond his control, and in such a case the man is not accountable. But when the conviction has been reached as the result of voluntary deliberation, then he is held morally responsible for it.

Ghazālī deals with the subject of the soul's destiny. Because of the fact that he was able to accept so many of the positions of the Aristotelian philosophers and to find a harmony between their teachings and those of Islam, we may naturally expect him to say, with Ibn Sīnā, that the rational soul, prepared by the practice of the virtues, attains perfection after death.[66] In fact, Ghazālī does make almost that same statement. But he does it quite incidentally when he says that at death the veils of sense are removed, and the soul sees clearly and knows fully the true nature of reality.

But in the closing portion of this book Ghazālī does not stress the philosophical position; indeed he turns toward the position of Islam. The general and particular decrees (*qaḍāʾ wa qadr*) of God determine inevitably and inexorably the fate of the soul. Some hearts are built up by means of piety and purified through discipline. Others are burdened by passion and utterly corrupted by foul actions, so that they have no place for good. The hearts of most men sway between the good and the evil, the angel and the demon, until the dominant factor obtains the victory. But this factor has been caused to predominate by the predestination of God. Because of the divine decree, obedience has been made easy for some, and disobedience for others, God guides aright and leads astray.

66 Hastings, *Religion and Ethics*, 2:276a.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Author's Foreword

In the Name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate.[1]

Praise belongs to God,[2] whose majesty perplexes the hearts and thoughts of those who seek in vain to comprehend it;[3] whose shining light at its beginning is such as to bewilder eye and sight; who is acquainted with all hidden secrets; who knows all that conscience conceals; who has no need of counselor or helper in ruling His kingdom; the Overturner of hearts and the Forgiver of sins; the Concealer of faults; the Deliverer from anxieties. And may blessings and peace rest in abundance upon the master of the messengers, who unites religion and defeats heretics, and upon his descendants, the righteous, and the pure.

The honor and excellence of man, in which he surpasses all other sorts of creatures, is his aptitude for knowing God, praise be to Him. This knowledge is man's beauty and perfection and glory in the present world, and his provision and store for the world to come. He is prepared for this knowledge only through his heart, and not by means of any of his members. For it is the heart that knows God, and works for God, and strives toward God, and draws near to Him, and reveals that which is in the presence of God. The members of the body, on the other hand, are merely

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1 A pious phrase known as the *basmala*. It confers blessings, and is used at the beginning of formal writings as well as in many other connections touching all phases of Muslim life.

2 The *ḥamdala* is an ascription of praise to God; it is used as one of the fixed introductory phrases to every formal writing.

3 Zabīdī says that the mystics' knowledge of God is in the fact that they come experientially to know that they can never know Him in the sense of having a complete experiential knowledge of His being and attributes. This knowledge is His alone.

followers, servants, and instruments that the heart uses and employs as the king uses his slave, as the shepherd makes use of his flock, or as the craftsman uses his tool.

For it is the heart that is accepted by God when it is free from all save Him, but veiled from God when it becomes wholly occupied with anything other than Him. It is the heart upon which claims are made, with which conversations are carried on, and with which remonstrance is made, and which is punished. It rejoices in nearness to God and prospers if kept true, and is undone and miserable if debased and corrupted.[4] It is that which in reality is obedient to God, the Exalted, and the acts of devotion that are manifest in the members of the body are but its light. It is that also which is disobedient and rebellious against God, the Exalted, and the acts of turpitude that course through the members are but its effects. By its darkness and its light there appear the good and evil qualities of its external appearance, since "every vessel drips that which it contains."[5] The heart is that which, if a man knows it, he knows himself, and if he knows himself, he knows his Lord. It is that which, if a man knows it not, he knows not himself, and if he knows not himself, he knows not his Lord.[6] He who knows not his own heart is still more ignorant of everything else, since the majority of mankind know not their own hearts and their own selves, for intervention has been made between them and their own selves. For *God intervenes between a man and his heart* (8:24). His intervention consists in preventing man from observing it [i.e., his heart], and watching over it, and becoming acquainted with its qualities, and perceiving how

4 Cf. Qur'ān 91:9–10.

5 An Arabic proverb, poetic in form according to MSS texts, quoted in G. W. Freytag, *Arabum Proverbia*, 3 vols. (Bonn, 1839), 2:371, no. 179. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Maydanī, *Majmaʿ al-amthāl* (Egypt: al-Maṭbaʿa al-Bahiyya al-Miṣriyya, 1342/1923), 2:73.

6 This is a proverb often quoted by Muslim writers of all shades of belief. It corresponds to the 'know thyself' of Socrates and other early Greek philosophers. To this was added the idea that man's soul is an inbreathing of divine life, Qur'ān 32:8. Bayḍāwī, in his comment on this verse, quotes this proverb. Philosophical Muslims of different groups, including the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' and Ibn Sīnā use this proverb. Ibn al-ʿArabī and Ghazālī, among other mystics, use the phrase repeatedly, sometimes speaking of it as a *ḥadīth* from the Prophet. See *Kīmiyā'*, p. 4. Zabīdī says that this is reported to be a saying of Yaḥyā b. Muʿādh al-Rāzī (d. 258/872), a famous preacher. See Ibn Khallikān, *Kitāb wafayāt al-ʿayān*, trans. MacGuckin de Slane as *Ibn Khallikan's Biographical Dictionary*, 4 vols. (Paris, 1842–71), 4:51ff.

it is turned between two of the fingers of the Merciful;[7] and how at one time it lusts for the lowest of the low and is brought down to the plane of the demons; and at another time, it mounts up to the highest of the high, and advances to the world of the angels who are drawn near to God (*al-malā'ika al-muqarrabūn*).[8] He who knows not his heart, to watch over it and be mindful of it, and to observe what shines on it and in it of the treasures of the world of spirits (*al-malakūt*),[9] he is one of those of whom God, the Exalted, has said, *those who forget God; and He made them to forget their own souls. Such are the rebellious transgressors!* (59:19). Thus the knowledge of the heart and of the real nature of its qualities is the root of religion and the foundation of the mystic traveler's way.

Since we have completed the first part of this book,[10] which deals with those acts of worship and customs that are carried out by the external bodily members, which is external knowledge, and since we have promised[11] to explain in the second part those mortal vices and saving virtues that come upon the heart, which is inner knowledge, we must preface this part with two books. One book will deal with the explanation of the heart's qualities and characteristics, and the second with the manner of disciplining the heart and improving its characteristics.[12] After that we will launch forth into a detailed discussion of the things that destroy and save. So we shall now mention that which can be most readily understood of the exposition of the wonders of the heart by means of examples. Most minds are too dull to comprehend a plain statement of its wonders and of its secrets that pertain to the realm of the world of spirits.

7 A much quoted *ḥadīth*, ʿAbdallāh b. Muslim Ibn Qutayba, *Ta'wīl mukhtalaf al-ḥadīth* (Cairo: Maṭbaʿa Kurdistān al-ʿIlmiyya, 1326/1908), p. 263. Muslim also relates it from ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAmr.

8 "Al-malā'ika al-muqarrabūn"; see *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. M. Th. Houtsma, et al. (Leiden, 1913–37), 3:189ff. esp. 3:190a, Also Wensinck, *The Muslim Creed* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932), p. 198.

9 For a treatment of *mulk* and *malakūt* see Macdonald, "The Life of al-Ghazālī," pp. 116ff.; Wensinck, *On the Relation between Ghazālī's Cosmology and his Mysticism* (Amsterdam, 1933).

10 I.e., the first half of the *Iḥyā'*.

11 See *Iḥya'* text in Zabīdī, *Itḥāf*, 1:63.

12 Editor's note: The second book of the third quarter has been translated by T. J. Winter, *On Disciplining the Soul and Breaking the Two Desires* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1995.)

Chapter 1

An Exposition of the Meaning of 'Soul,' 'Spirit,' 'Heart,' and 'Intelligence,' and of the Purport of these Names

KNOW THAT THERE ARE four names that are used in these chapters. But few of the leading savants have a comprehensive knowledge of these names and their different meanings, and of the definitions of the things named. Most of the mistakes regarding them originate in ignorance of the meaning of these names, and of the way in which they are applied to different objects. We will explain as much of the meaning of these names as pertains to our purpose.

One of these is the term 'heart' (*qalb*), and it is used with two meanings. One of them is the cone-shaped organ of flesh that is located at the left side of the chest. It is flesh of a particular sort within which there is a cavity, and in this cavity there is black blood that is the source (*manbaʿ*) and seat (*maʿdan*) of the spirit (*rūḥ*).[1] We do not now propose to explain its shape nor its mode of operation since religious ends have no connection therewith, but only the aim of physicians.[2] Animals and even the dead have this heart of flesh. Whenever we use the term 'heart' in this book, we do not mean this sort of heart, for it is but an impotent bit of

1 "Nafs," *EI*. *EI*², 7:880. Cf. "The blood round the heart is the thought of men." H. Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, quoted in Brett, *Psychology*, 1:359. Editor's note: seat (*maʿdan*) may also be translated as origin, or source.

2 For the early ideas of Arabian physiology, see Edward G. Browne, *Arabian Medicine* (Cambridge, 1921), pp. 121ff. Cf. Brett, *Psychology*, 1:283ff.

flesh, belonging to the visible material world (*ʿālam al-mulk wa-l-shahāda*), and is perceived by the sense of sight, by animals as well as by mankind.

The second meaning of the 'heart' is a subtle tenuous substance[3] of an ethereal spiritual sort (*laṭīfa rabbāniyya rūḥāniyya*), which is connected with the physical heart. This subtle tenuous substance is the real essence of man. The heart is the part of man that perceives and knows and experiences; it is addressed, punished, rebuked, and held responsible, and it has some connection with the physical heart. The majority of men have been become perplexed when they tried to perceive the nature of this connection. Its connection therewith resembles the connection of accidents with substances, of qualities with the things they qualify, of the user of a tool with the tool, or of that which occupies a place with the place. We will guard against trying to explain this for two reasons: first, because it deals with mystical sciences (*ʿulūm al-mukāshafa*),[4] and our aim in this book includes only the knowledge of proper conduct (*ʿilm al muʿāmala*); and second, because to ascertain it calls for a disclosing of the secret of the spirit (*rūḥ*), concerning which the Messenger[5] of God ﷺ did not speak, and therefore no one else should speak.[6] Our aim then is this: whenever we use the term 'heart' (*qalb*) in this book we mean by it this subtle tenuous substance. And what we propose is to mention its characteristics (*awṣāf*) and states (*aḥwāl*),[7] not its real nature (*ḥaqīqa*)[8] in itself, for the science of practical religion does not require the mention of its real nature.

The second term is the 'spirit' (*rūḥ*), and it is also used with two meanings relevant to our purpose. One of these [meanings] is a subtle body whose source is the cavity of the physical heart, and which spreads by means of the pulsative arteries to all the other parts of the body.[9] Its circulation in

3 This concept has been expressed by the word 'subtlety,' following the usage of the older philosophy. See Macdonald, *The Religious Life and Attitude in Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1912), pp. 221, 229ff. The nearest parallel in modern psychology to the refined nature of this 'subtle tenuous substance' is probably found in the ectoplasm or teleplasm of psychical research.

4 For the different kinds of science and knowledge see "ʿilm," *EI²* and the references there given.

5 "Rasūl," *EI*, 3:1127ff. *EI²*, 13:454.

6 A *ḥadīth* given by Bukhārī and Muslim from Ibn Masʿūd.

7 "Aḥwāl," *EI*, 1:227. *EI²*, 12:343.

8 "Ḥaqīqa," *EI*, 1:223ff.

9 Zabīdī says that this 'spirit' is a very refined substance, the animal life principle.

the body and the overflowing from it of the light of life, sense perception, sight, hearing, and smell to the members of the body resemble the flood of light from a lamp that is moved around throughout a house. Whenever the lamp is brought to any part of the house it is lit by it. Life is like the light that falls upon the walls; the spirit is like the lamp; the circulation of the spirit and its movement within correspond to the movement of the lamp throughout the house by the moving of the one who moves it. Whenever physicians use the term 'spirit' they have in mind this meaning, which is a subtle vapor produced by the heat of the heart. It is not our purpose to explain this usage of the term since its connections are within the scope of physicians who treat the body. The purpose of physicians of religion who treat the heart that it may be led near to the Lord of the worlds has no connection at all with the explanation of this 'spirit.'

The second meaning is that subtle tenuous substance in man which knows and perceives, which we have already explained in one of the meanings of the 'heart.' It is the meaning intended by God, the Exalted, in His statement, *Say: "the spirit is my Lord's affair"* (17:85). It is a marvelous and lordly (*rabbānī*) affair,[10] the real and ultimate nature of which most intellects (*ʿuqūl*) and [people's] understandings (*afhām*) are unable to grasp.

The third term, 'soul' (*nafs*),[11] partakes of many meanings, two of which pertain to our purpose. By one is denoted that meaning which includes both the faculty of anger (*ghaḍab*) and of appetence (*shahwa*)[12] in man,

The arteries are made doubly strong so as to be able to carry the subtle body (*jism laṭīf*) which is the spirit. Zabīdī quotes Suhrawardī's *ʿAwārif al-maʿārif* on the spirit. Animals have it. It gives the power of sense perception. It is strengthened by nourishment. Zabīdī says further that the learned say that this spirit is a tenuous vaporous body produced from the blood that comes to its left chamber. Its value lies in the way it bears the physical powers so that they are circulated in the body.

10 Zabīdī says that thinkers and writers have differed much about the true nature of the spirit (*rūḥ*).

11 The *nafs* is the appetitive soul or self, the 'flesh' of Pauline usage; see *EI* 3:827–30, and *EI²* 7:880. Macdonald, *Religious Life and Attitude*, pp. 228–30.

12 The twofold division of the irrational soul according to Plato was (1) *thymos*, anger or the irascible faculty, including courage, energy, and ambition. This is the higher of the two and its seat is the heart. (2) *Epithymia*, the appetence or the concupiscible faculty, including the appetites. It is the lower part and its seat is in the abdominal cavity. This idea with slight variation is a basic factor in the psychology of Ghazālī.

which we will explain later. This meaning predominates among Sufis,[13] for they mean by the 'soul' that principle in man that includes his blameworthy qualities (*ṣifāt madhmūma*). So they say, "The soul must be striven against and broken." This is alluded to by [the Prophet] ﷺ in his statement, "Your soul, which is between your two sides, is your worst enemy."[14]

The second meaning is that subtle tenuous substance that we have mentioned, which is, in reality, man. It is the soul of man and his essence. But it is described by different descriptives according to its differing states. When it is at rest under His command, and agitation has left it on account of its opposition to the fleshly appetites, it is called 'the soul at rest' (*al-nafs al-muṭma'inna*). Of such a soul did God, the Exalted, say, *Oh, you soul at peace, return to your Lord, pleased, and pleasing Him* (89:27–8). The soul, according to the first definition, cannot be conceived of as returning to God, the Exalted, for it is far removed from God and belongs to the party of Satan.[15] But when the soul is not completely at rest, but is striving to drive off and oppose the appetitive soul, it is called 'the upbraiding soul' (*al-nafs al-lawwāma*); for it upbraids its possessor whenever he falls short in the worship of his Master. God, the Exalted, said, *Nay, and I swear by the upbraiding soul* (75:2). But if the soul leaves its opposition and becomes submissive and obedient to the demands of the fleshly appetites and the invitations of Satan, it is called 'the soul that commands to evil' (*al-nafs al-ammāra bil-sū'*) God, the Exalted, said, relating the words of Joseph ؑ or the wife of the prince *And I do not acquit myself, for verily the soul commands to evil* (12:53). Yet it may sometimes be said, "By the 'soul that commands to evil,' is meant the soul according to the first definition," for that 'soul' is most blameworthy. But the soul according to the second definition is praiseworthy, for it is man's very self, or his essence and real nature, which knows God, the Exalted, and all other knowable things.[16]

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13 "Sufi," a Muslim mystic; see "taṣawwuf," *EI*, 4:681ff. *EI*², 10:313.

14 A *ḥadīth* quoted by Bayhaqī from Ibn ʿAbbās.

15 Editor's note: throughout the translation, *shayṭān* is translated alternately as 'demon,' 'devil,' or 'Satan,' and can refer to the Devil or any of his progeny. When referred to by Imam al-Ghazālī as Iblīs, it is left as such and denotes the Devil.

16 Zabīdī gives an additional list of types of souls: (1) *al-nafs al-dassāsa*, or the concealing soul (Qur'ān 91:10); (2) *al-nafs al-mushtarā*, or the bought soul (Qur'ān 9:112); (3) *al-nafs al-sawwāla al-dassāsa al-qattāla*, or the soul that makes evil seem inconsequential, which conceals and slays; (4) *al-nafs al-zākiyya*, or the purifying soul (Qur'ān 91:9); (5) *al-nafs al-dhākira*, or the remembering soul (Qur'ān 7:204);

The fourth term, which is intellect (*ʿaql*),[17] also partakes of various meanings that we have mentioned in the *Book of Knowledge*.[18] Of these, two pertain to our purpose. 'Intellect' may be used with the force of knowledge (*ʿilm*) of the real nature of things, and is thus an expression for the quality of knowledge whose seat is the heart. Second, 'intellect' may be used to denote that which perceives knowledge, or the heart in the sense of the subtle tenuous substance. And we know that every knower has within himself an entity (*wujūd*) which is a self-existing principle (*aṣl qā'im bi-nafsihi*), and knowledge is a quality (*ṣifa*) residing in it, and the quality is other than the thing qualified. So 'intellect' may be used as meaning the quality of the knower, and it may be used to mean the seat of perception, the mind which perceives. The latter meaning is that referred to in the saying of the Prophet ﷺ, "The first thing God created was the intellect."[19] For knowledge is an accident that cannot be conceived as the first created thing; indeed its seat had to have been created before it or along with it, and because one cannot converse with it [i.e., knowledge, *ʿilm*]. A *ḥadīth* also relates that He, the Exalted, said to the intellect, "Draw near," and it drew near. Then He said, "Retreat," and it retreated.

So it is now made clear to you that there exist the following meanings of these names: the corporeal heart, the corporeal spirit, the appetitive soul, and intelligence. These are four meanings that are denoted by four

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(6) *al-nafs al-mamlūka*, or the controlled (possessed) soul (Qur'ān 5:28); and (7) *al-nafs al-ʿilmiyya*, or the knowledgeable (ideal) soul.

17 See "ʿaql," *EI*, 1:242ff. for discussion and bibliography. *EI*², 1:341.

18 *The Book of Knowledge* is the first book of the *Iḥyā'*. The discussion referred to is in Zabīdī, *Itḥāf*, 1:458ff. Editor's note: see the published translation of this book, *The Book of Knowledge*, trans. Nabih Amin Faris (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1966). Also see the PhD thesis of William McCall, "The Book of Knowledge," Being a Translation, with Introduction and Notes of al-Ghazzali's Book of the '*Ihya, Kitab al-Ilm*' (Hartford Seminary, 1940), (available at www.ghazali.org).

19 A weak *ḥadīth* with many variations, discussed at length in Zabīdī, *Itḥāf*, 1:453ff. Zabīdī here gives one fuller form of it as follows: When God created the intellect He said to it, "Draw near," and it drew near. Then He said, "Retreat," and it retreated. Then He said, "I have created nothing that I love more than you; by you I take and by you I give." The idea to which Ghazālī refers in this passage is comparable to the Neoplatonic concept of the intellect being the first emanation from the Absolute. See Browne, *Arabian Medicine*, pp. 121ff. Cf. also the Active Intellect of Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā, Ueberweg, *Philosophy*, 1:412ff.; Brett, *Psychology*, 2:53.

terms.[20] There is also a fifth meaning, which is that subtle tenuous substance in man that knows and perceives, and all four of these names are successively applied to it. There are then five meanings and four terms, and each term is used with two meanings.

Most of the learned (*ʿulamāʾ*) are confused in distinguishing between these terms, and in regard to their successive use. So you find them talking about involuntary suggestions (*khawāṭir*),[21] and saying, "This is the suggestion of the intellect, this is the suggestion of the spirit, this is the suggestion of the heart, and this is the suggestion of the soul," and the observer does not understand the distinction in the meanings of these names. So for the sake of uncovering this matter we have put here at the beginning an explanation of these names. Wherever the expression 'heart' occurs in the Qurʾān and in the Sunna, its intended meaning is that in man which discerns and comes to know the real nature of things. This may be alluded to by metonymy as the heart which is in the breast, because between that subtle tenuous substance and the physical heart there is a special connection.[22] For although this subtle tenuous substance is connected with and used by the rest of the body as well, yet this connection is by means of the heart, so therefore its primary connection is with the heart. It is as though the heart were its seat, its kingdom, its world, and its mount. Therefore Sahl al-Tustarī[23] has likened the heart to the throne and the breast to the seat. He said, "The heart is the throne (*ʿarsh*) and the breast is the seat (*kursī*)." But it must not be supposed that he meant that it is the throne of God and His seat, for that is impossible. But he meant that the heart is its [i.e., the subtle tenuous substance's] kingdom and the primary channel for its planning and activity. These then [i.e., the physical heart and the breast] stand in the same relationship to the heart [the subtle tenuous substance] as do the throne and seat to God, the Exalted.[24]

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20 Editor's note: Zabīdī comments that they are soul, spirit, heart, and intellect.

21 *Khawāṭir*, see Introduction, pp. xxixff.

22 Ghazālī gives the heart the place of honor; it is the seat of the noblest functions, the brain being given an inferior position. For this concept as it was held in the Aristotelian psychology see Brett, *Psychology*, 1:106.

23 Sahl al-Tustarī, Abū Muḥammad Sahl b. ʿAbdallāh b. Yūnus (203–63/818–96 or 897), was a Sunnī theologian, a mystic, and a strict ascetic. He held that in interpreting the Qurʾān it was necessary to seek four meanings: literal, allegorical, moral, and analogical. See *EI*², 8:840.

24 See "kursī," *EI*², 5:509.

This metaphor is appropriate only in certain respects. The explanation of this is not vital to our purpose and so let us pass it by.



Chapter 2

An Exposition of the Armies of the Heart

GOD, THE EXALTED, HAS said, *And none knows the armies of your Lord except Him* (74:31). For in hearts and spirits and in other worlds God, praise be to Him, has "armies levied,"[1] whose nature and the details of whose number none knows save He. We will now refer to some of the armies of the heart such as pertain to our purpose.

The heart has two armies: an army seen with the eyes, and an army seen only by insight. The heart is as king, and the armies are as servants and helpers, and this is the meaning of 'army' (*jund*). Now its army, which is visible to the eye, includes the hand, the foot, the eye, the ear, the tongue, and the rest of the members, both outer and inner. These all serve the heart and are in subjection thereto, and it is the disposition of them, and repels for them. They were created with an inherent disposition to obey it, and cannot disobey it or rebel against it. For if it orders the eye to be opened, it is opened; if it orders the foot to move, it moves; if it orders the tongue to speak and is fully determined in the matter, it speaks; and so also for the rest of the members. The subjection of the members and the senses to the heart resembles, from one point of view, the subjection of the angels to God, the Exalted; for they were created with an inherent disposition to obedience, and they cannot disobey Him. *They do not disobey God in what He commands them, but do what they are commanded* (66:6). There

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1 An allusion to the well-known *ḥadīth* narrated by Muslim, "Spirits are armies levied (set in array)." See Wensinck, *Concordance et Indices de la Tradition Musulmane* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1933–7), 1:365.

is, however, this one difference: the angels ﷺ know their own obedience and conformity, whereas the eyelids obey the heart in opening and closing because they are in subjection to it, and they have no knowledge of themselves nor of their obedience to the heart.

The heart needs these armies because of its need for a vehicle, and for provision for that journey for which it was created, the journey to God, praise be to Him, and for passing through its stages (*manāzil*) until He is met face to face. For this cause hearts were created, as God, the Exalted, has said, *I have not created the jinn and humans save that they may worship me* (51:56). The vehicle of the heart is the body alone; its provision is knowledge alone; and the means of attaining the provision for the journey and supplying one's self therewith lie only in righteous acts.

It is impossible for the creature to reach God, praise be to Him, except by dwelling in the body and passing through this present world (*al-dunyā*),[2] for the nearest stage must be passed through in order that the most distant stage may be attained. This present world is the seedbed (*mazraʿa*) of the world to come (*al-ākhira*),[3] and it is one of the stages of right guidance (*hudā*). It is called 'nearer' (*dunyā*) only because it is the nearer of the two abodes. The heart must therefore get its supply of provision from this world. The body is its vehicle by which it comes into contact with this world. Thus the body needs to be cared for and preserved, and it is preserved only by procuring for it such food and other things as are suitable for it, and by warding off from it the causes of destruction which are repugnant to it and destroy it.

The heart thus needs two armies in order to procure food: an internal army which is the appetite, and an external [army] which is the hand and the members that procure food. So the needed appetites are created in the heart, and the members of the body are created which are the instruments of the appetites.

Likewise the heart needs two armies to drive off the things that lead to destruction: an internal army of anger (*ghaḍab*), by which it drives off things that lead to destruction and takes revenge upon its enemies, and an external [army], which is the hand and the foot by which it carries out the dictates of anger. This is completed by means of things outside the body, such as weapons, and the like.

2 See "dunyā," *EI²*, 2:626.

3 See "ākhira," *EI*, 1:231. *EI²*, 1:325.

Then, too, the appetite for food and the means of securing it are of no profit to him who needs food as long as he has no knowledge of food. So in order to gain this knowledge, the heart needs two armies: an internal army, which is the perception of sight, taste, smelling, hearing, and touch; and an external [army], which is the eye, ear, nose, etc. A detailed account of the need for these and the wisdom in them would be very long, and many volumes would not contain it. We have referred to a small portion of it in the *Book of [Patience and] Thankfulness*,[4] and this will suffice.

All the armies of the heart are limited to three classes. One class incites and instigates either to obtain that which is profitable and suitable, as, for example, appetence (*shahwa*); or to the ward off that which is harmful and destructive, as, for example, anger (*ghaḍab*). This impulse may be called the will (*irāda*). The second class is that which moves the members to the attainment of these desired ends, and it is called power (*qudra*). These are armies which are diffused throughout the rest of the members, especially the muscles and tendons. The third class is that which perceives and gathers information as spies. These include the power of sight, hearing, smell, taste, etc., which are divided among certain appointed members. This is called knowledge (*ʿilm*) and perception (*idrāk*).

Corresponding to each of these internal armies there are external armies, which are the physical members. These are made up of fat, flesh, nerve, blood, and bone, which are prepared as the instruments of these armies. Thus the power to seize lies only in the fingers, the power to see only in the eye and so on for the other powers. We are not now speaking of the external armies, I mean the physical members, for they belong to the visible material world, but rather of those unseen armies by which the heart is helped. This third class, which alone of this group perceives, is divided into that which is lodged in the outer abodes, or the five senses, I mean hearing, sight, smell, taste, and touch; and that which has been lodged in inner abodes, or the ventricles of the brain, which are also five. Thus after seeing an object a man closes his eye and perceives its image (*ṣūra*) within himself. This is the retentive imagination (*khayāl*). This image then remains with him by reason of something which preserves it, which is the army of memory (*al-jund al-ḥāfiẓ*). He then thinks about what he has remembered and combines part with part, after which he recalls what

4 The second book of the fourth quarter of the *Iḥyāʾ*. Editor's note: forthcoming translation by Henry Littlejohn, *On Patience and Thankfulness* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 2010).

he had forgotten and it comes back to him again. Then he gathers together in his retentive imagination all the meanings of his sense impressions by means of the common [i.e., shared] sense (*ḥiss mushtarak*).[5] For there are within man common sense, imagination (*takhayyul*), reflection (*tafakkur*), recollection (*tadhakkur*), and memory (*ḥifẓ*).[6] Were it not that God created the powers of memory, thought, recollection, and imagination, the brain would be devoid of them even as is the hand and the leg. Thus these powers are internal armies and their seats are internal.

Such then are the armies of the heart. It would take a long time to explain this by citing examples so that the understanding of the weak could comprehend it, while our purpose in such a book as this is that the strong and masterful from among the learned can profit thereby. Yet we will strive to make the weak understand by citing examples so that this is brought within the range of their understanding.



5 *Sensus communis*. See Brett, *Psychology*, 1:120ff.; 2:55; Howard C. Warren, *Dictionary of Psychology* (Cambridge, MA, 1934), p. 51.

6 For a discussion of these internal senses see Harry Wolfson, "The Internal Senses in Latin, Arabic, and Hebrew Philosophic Texts," *Harvard Theological Review* 28, no. 2 (April 1935), pp. 69–133. See also Brett, *Psychology*, 2:55ff.

Chapter 3

An Exposition of the Similitudes of the Heart and its Internal Armies

KNOW THAT THE TWO armies of anger and appetence are sometimes perfectly obedient to the heart, which helps it along the path it journeys, and their companionship on the journey that lies before it is desirable. But these two also disobey the heart at times, in trespass and revolt, until they gain the mastery over it and bring it into subjection. This results in destroying it and cutting it off from its journey, by which it might reach eternal happiness.

The heart has another army, which is knowledge, wisdom (*ḥikma*), and reflection, the explanation of which will follow. It should gain the assistance of this army, for it is the party of God,[1] the Exalted, against the other two armies, for they may join themselves to the party of Satan. If it neglects this help and gives the army of anger and appetence dominion over itself, it will surely perish and suffer a manifest loss. This is the state of the majority of people, for their intellects have been forced by their appetence to labor at devising stratagems to satisfy the appetence, whereas appetence should be forced by their intellects to labor at that which the mind needs. We will make this clearer to your understanding[2] by means of three examples.

1 Cf. Qurʾān 5:56, 58:22. See *EI*, 2:322ff; "ḥizb," *EI*², 3:513.

2 Zabīdī, *Itḥāf* and Princeton MS read 'heart.'

Example One.[3] We may say that the soul (I mean by the soul the aforementioned subtle tenuous substance) is like a ruler in his city and his kingdom, for the body is the kingdom of the soul, its world, its abode, and its city. The powers and members of the body occupy the place of craftsmen and laborers. The intelligent reflective power is like the sincere adviser and intelligent minister. Appetence is like an evil slave who brings food and provisions to the city. Anger and ardor (*ḥamiyya*) are like the chief of police. The slave who brings the provisions is a liar, a deceiver, an impostor, and a malicious person who plays the part of a sincere adviser, while beneath his advice there is dreadful evil and deadly poison. It is his wont and his custom to contend against every plan that the wise minister makes, so that not even for an hour does he cease his contention and opposition to his [the minister's] opinions. When the ruler in his kingdom seeks the advice of his minister and shuns the counsel of this vile slave, inferring indeed from his counsel that the right course is that which is contradictory to his opinion; and [when] the chief of police disciplines him and brings him under the authority of the minister and causes him to be under his orders, empowering him on his part over this vile slave and his followers and helpers, so that the slave is under authority and not the possessor of it, and so that he [the slave] is subject to orders and directions and not the one who gives orders and directs; then the rule of his [the king's] state is upright and then justice is ordered because of him.

Thus when the soul seeks the aid of the intellect and is disciplined by the ardor of anger, which it empowers over appetence, seeking the aid of one of the two against the other; sometimes by lessening the degree and excess of anger by making an ally of appetence and gradually modifying it; sometimes by subduing and overcoming the appetence by giving anger and ardor power over it and by disapproving of its demands; then its powers are made harmonious and its character comely. Whoever turns aside from this path is like the one of whom God, the Exalted, has said, *Have you seen such a one as takes as his god his own vain desire? God has, knowing (him as such), left him astray* (45:23). He, the Exalted, also said, *and followed his lust and his likeness was as the likeness of a dog; if you chase him, he pants, or if you leave him, he [still] pants* (7:176). Again He ﷻ said about the one who restrains his soul from lust, *[But] as for he who feared standing before his Lord, and restrained his soul from lower desires, then indeed Paradise will be [his] refuge* (79:40–1). The way in which these armies strive, and

3 Cf. Weliur-Rahman, "The Psychology of Ibn-i-Sina," p. 355.

the way in which some of them are given power over others will be told, if God, the Exalted, so wills, in the *Book of Disciplining the Soul.*

Example Two. Know that the body is like a city and the mind (*ʿaql*), I mean the perceptive power in man, is like a king who rules over it. Its perceptive powers of the senses, both externel and internal, are like its armies and helpers. Its members are like the people of the city. 'The soul that commands to evil,'[4] which is appetence and anger, is like the enemy who opposes him in his kingdom and strives to destroy his people. His body thus becomes, as it were, a frontier outpost, and his soul the place in which guards are stationed. So if he is one who strives against the enemy and routs him and conquers him as he ought, then will his deeds be praised on the day when he returns to the Presence [i.e., of God]. As God, the Exalted, says, *and those who strive in God's way with their wealth and their persons, God has preferred those who strive with their wealth and their persons a rank above those who sit still* (4:95). But if he loses the frontier and neglects his people, his deeds will be blamed and vengeance will be taken against him [from those he neglected] when he meets God the Exalted. A *ḥadīth* says, "It will be said to him on the day of resurrection, 'O evil shepherd, you ate meat and drank milk and did not bring back the lost nor restore the broken; today will I [the one neglected] be revenged against you.'"[5] It is also to this struggle that reference is made in the saying of the Prophet, "We have returned from the lesser struggle (*jihād*) to the greater."[6]

Example Three. The intellect is like a horseman who has gone hunting. His appetence is his horse and his anger is his dog. When the horseman is skilled and his horse well broken and his dog trained and taught, then he is able to succeed. But when he is himself clumsy, his horse ungovernable, and his dog vicious, then his horse is neither guided under him, nor does his dog go forth in obedience to his signs. So he himself deserves to perish

4 Cf. Qur'ān 12:53.

5 A weak *ḥadīth*, not found in the well-known collections. ʿAbd al-Raḥīm b. al-Ḥusayn al-ʿIrāqī (725–806/1325–1404), the famous Egyptian *ḥadīth* scholar who traced the sources of the *ḥadīths* that Ghazālī quotes in the *Iḥyāʾ*, says that he did not find a source for this *ḥadīth*. Editor's note: Zabīdī says it was narrated by Abū Nuʿaym in the biography of Mālik b. Dīnār.

6 ʿIrāqī says that this was a weak *ḥadīth*, found in the collection of Bayhaqī. See Ghazālī, *Ayyuhā al-walad*, trans. George H. Scherer, *O Youth!* (Beirut: American Press, 1933), p. 62n2.

rather than to gain that which he seeks. The clumsiness of the horseman is like the ignorance of a man, his paucity of wisdom, and his dim insight. The restiveness of the horse is like the victory of appetence, and especially the appetite for food and for sexual indulgence. The viciousness of the dog is like the victory of anger and its domination. We ask God in His grace to grant us success.[7]



7 Success (*tawfīq*) is the divine favor by which success is attained. Theologians differed in explaining it. The Ashʿarī position is that it was the creation of the power needed for obedience. See Tahānawī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-funūn*, p. 1501; Asín, *Algazel*, pp. 447ff.

Chapter 4

An Exposition of the Special Properties of the Heart of Man

KNOW THAT GOD HAS bestowed on all animals other than man all of these things that we have mentioned. For animals have appetence and anger, and the senses, both outer and inner. Thus the sheep sees the wolf with her eye and knows in her heart its enmity, and so flees from it. That is an inner perception.

We will now mention that which peculiarly characterizes the heart of man, and because of which he has been given great honor and is qualified to draw near to God, the Exalted. This special characteristic has its basis in knowledge and will. By 'knowledge' is meant that knowledge which deals with the things of this world[1] and the world to come, and with intellectual realities (*ḥaqāʾiq ʿaqliyya*). These things are beyond the objects of sense perception, and animals do not share with man in them. Nay, rather, knowledge of axioms and universals (*al-ʿulūm al-kulliyya al-ḍarūriyya*) is a peculiar property of the intellect. Thus a man judges that a single individual[2] cannot be imagined to be in two places at one time. This is his judgment for every individual, although it is well known that he has only observed some individuals by his sense perception. So his judgment passed on all individuals goes beyond that which sense has perceived. If you understand this in regard to this obvious axiomatic knowledge, it is even more obvious in the rest of the theoretical sciences (*naẓariyyāt*).

1 Zabīdī and Princeton MS read 'of religion.'

2 Zabīdī text reads 'horse' instead of 'individual' throughout this illustration.

Now regarding the will, when a man perceives by his intellect the consequences of an act and the best way to do [something], there is aroused within his essential self (*dhāt*) a desire for the advantageous way, a desire to exert himself in the means to attain it, and also the will to this end. This differs from the will of appetence and the will power that animals have, indeed it is quite the opposite of appetence. For appetence shuns bleeding and cupping,[3] while the intelligent [man] wants them, seeks them, and freely spends money for them. The appetite inclines to savory foods in time of sickness, while the intelligent [man] finds within himself that which causes him to abstain from them. This abstinence does not come from appetence. Had God created the intellect that gives information regarding the consequences of things, and not created this cause that moves the members to carry out the mandates of the intellect, then the judgment of the intellect would, in reality, be lost. Thus the heart of man has the special properties of knowledge and will which separate it from the other animals, nay, rather, which separate it from the youth in his original constitution,[4] for this comes to him only with maturity.

Now appetence, anger, and the external and internal senses exist potentially in youth, but in attaining them the youth must pass through two stages. One stage is that his heart must comprehend the knowledge of axioms and first principles, such as the knowledge of the impossibility of impossible things, and the possibility of things manifestly possible. But in this stage he has not as yet attained to the speculative sciences, save that they have become possible and within easy reach of attainment. His status in relation to knowledge is like that of the writer whose knowledge of writing consists merely in knowing inkstand, pen, and the letters as they are written separately but not in their combined forms, for such a person is well on the way to writing but has not as yet achieved it.

The second stage is that he shall gain that knowledge which is acquired by experiment and thought, so that it is stored up in him and he can return to it whenever he wills. His status is like that of a man skilled in writing, who, on account of his ability therein, is called a writer, even when he is not actually engaged in writing. This is the highest stage of humanity, but in this stage there are innumerable degrees of contrast among men in the abundance or paucity of knowledge, in the dignity of knowledge or its sordidness, and in the way of attaining it. [This knowledge] comes

3 See Browne, *Arabian Medicine*, pp. 12, 43.

4 "Fiṭra," *EI*, 2:115ff. *EI*², 2:931.

to some hearts through divine revelation (*ilhām ilāhī*)[5] by way of immediate disclosure (*mubāda'a*) and unveiling (*mukāshafa*), and for some it is a thing to be learned and acquired. Sometimes it is gained quickly and sometimes slowly. In this stage are seen the varying degrees of the learned (*ʿulamāʾ*), the wise (*ḥukamāʾ*),[6] prophets (*anbiyāʾ*),[7] and saints (*awliyāʾ*).[8]

The degrees of advancement in knowledge are unlimited inasmuch as the knowledge of God, praise be to Him, is infinite. The highest rank is that of the prophet to whom is revealed all realities, or most of them, not by a process of acquisition nor after difficulty, but by a divine unveiling in the shortest possible time. In this happiness man draws near to God, the Exalted, in idea (*maʿnā*), reality, and quality, not in respect to place and distance. The levels up to these various degrees are the stages (*manāzil*) reached by those journeying (*sāʾirīn*) toward God, the Exalted, and there is no limitation to these stages. Each traveler knows only his own stage, to which he has attained on his journey. He knows it and he knows also those stages that are behind him. He does not know the real nature of that which is just ahead of him, but he may believe in it as he believes in the unseen. Even as we believe in prophecy and the prophet and accept his existence as true, while no one but a prophet knows the real nature of prophecy; and even as the embryo knows not the state of the infant, nor the infant the state of the discerning child and what has been opened up to him of axiomatic knowledge; nor the discerning child the state of the intelligent man and what he has acquired of speculative knowledge; so also the intelligent man knows not what attainments of the grace and mercy of God have been revealed to His saints and prophets. *The mercy which God grants to humanity none can withhold* (35:2). This mercy is generously bestowed by reason of the goodness and generosity of God ﷻ who does not begrudge it to anyone, but it only appears in those hearts that are exposed to the gifts of God. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Verily your Lord, in the days of your generation, has gifts; will you then not expose yourselves to them?"[9] This exposing of one's self to them is done by cleansing and purifying the heart from evil and from the turbidity that comes from a blameworthy

5 *Ilhām* is the general inspiration given to saints; see *EI*, 2:467ff. *EI*², 3:1119.

6 "Ḥukamāʾ," *EI*, 2:224. *EI*², "ḥikma," 3:377.

7 "Anbiyāʾ," *EI*, 3:802ff. *EI*², "nubuwwa," 8:93.

8 "Awliyāʾ," *EI*, 4:1109ff. *EI*², "walī," pl. "awliyāʾ," 11:109.

9 A *ḥadīth* described by ʿIrāqī as disagreed upon (*mukhtalaf al-isnād*), quoted also in *Iḥyāʾ*, 1:186.

character, as will be set forth later. This liberality is that which is referred to in the statement of the Prophet ﷺ, "God descends every night to the lowest heaven and says, 'Is there anyone who asks, that I may grant his request?'"[10] Again the Prophet ﷺ said, quoting the statement of his Lord, ﷻ "Great indeed is the longing of the righteous to meet me, and I long even more to meet them."[11] There is also the saying of [God], the Exalted,[12] "Whoever draws near to me by a span, I approach him by a cubit."[13]

All of this is an indication that the light of knowledge is not veiled from men's hearts by any stinginess or prohibition on the part of the Giver, who is far removed from such acts, but rather it is veiled by wickedness, turbidity, and anxiety within the heart. For hearts are like vessels; as long as they are filled with water, air cannot enter them. So the knowledge of the majesty of God, the Exalted, cannot enter into hearts that are occupied with anything apart from Him. It is to this that reference is made in the saying of the Prophet ﷺ, "The sons of Adam would look unto the kingdom of Heaven were it not that the demons hover over their hearts."[14] From all of this it is clear that the special characteristic peculiar to man is knowledge and wisdom,[15] and that the noblest kind of knowledge is the knowledge of God, His attributes, and His deeds. By this comes man's perfection, and in his perfection is his happiness and worthiness to live near the divine majesty and perfection. The body then is a vehicle for the soul, and the soul is the seat of knowledge. Knowledge is the end destined for man and his special characteristic for which he was created.

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10 An authentic *ḥadīth* given by Malik, Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī and Ibn Māja. Wensinck, *Concordance*, 2:152b.; Muḥammad al-Madanī, *al-Itḥāfāt al-saniyya fi-l-aḥādīth al-qudsiyya* (Hyderabad 1323), nos. 422, 796, 844–50; Ibn Qutayba, *Mukhtalaf al-ḥadīth*, p. 243. It is quoted also in Zabīdī, *Itḥāf*, 3:3.

11 ʿIrāqī says that he did not find a source for this *ḥadīth*.

12 Zabīdī says this a *ḥadīth qudsī*.

13 An authentic *ḥadīth* given by Bukhārī from Abū Hurayra, and accepted by all. Wensinck, *Handbook of Early Muḥammadan Tradition* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1927), p. 18b.; Ibn Qutayba, *Mukhtalaf al-ḥadīth*, p. 284.

14 A *ḥadīth* quoted by Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal from Abū Hurayra. Previously quoted in *Iḥyāʾ*, 1:264.

15 This was one of the teachings of the Aristotelian system; see Windelband, *Philosophy*, p. 154.

The horse shares with the donkey the power to carry burdens and is distinguished from it by its own special characteristics of charging and fleeing, and beauty of form, and therefore the horse was created for the sake of these special characteristics, the removal of which from it would bring it to the low rank of the donkey. Likewise man shares in some things with the donkey and the horse, and differs from them in others, which are his own special characteristics. These distinguishing characteristics are among the qualities of the angels who are drawn near to [God,] the Lord of the worlds.

Man has a rank between the beasts and the angels. Man, in that he takes nourishment and reproduces, is a plant; and in that he has sense perceptions and moves by his own free will, he is an animal; and with regard to his figure and his stature, he is like the relief figure on the wall; but his distinguishing characteristic is his experiential knowledge (*maʿrifa*) of the real nature of things.[16] Whoever makes use of all of his members and powers in such a way as to seek their aid in attaining to knowledge and work, is like the angels and is worthy to be joined to them, and deserves to be called an angel and a lordly being (*rabbānī*). Thus God, the Exalted, has declared, by the mouths of the women who beheld Joseph ﷺ, *This is no mortal; this can be no other than a noble angel* (12:31). But whoever spends his energy in following after bodily pleasures and eats as do the animals is brought down to the low depths of the beasts. So he becomes ignorant as an ox, gluttonous as a hog, greedy as a dog, or a cat, malevolent as a camel, vain as a leopard, or sly as a fox. Or he may unite all of these and become a rebellious demon (*shayṭān marīd*).

There is not a single one of the bodily members nor a single sense perception but that it helps along the path that leads to God, the Exalted, as will be shown, in part, in the *Book of [Patience and] Thankfulness*. Whoever uses them therein wins the victory, but whoever turns aside therefrom loses and is disappointed. The totality of man's happiness therein lies in making the meeting with God, the Exalted, his aim, the abode of the world

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16 For the Aristotelian development of the vegetative soul, the animal soul, and the rational soul, which is the basis of this section, see Windelband, *Philosophy*, pp. 149–54; Brett, *Psychology*, 1:128ff., 2:54ff. For the Muslim development of this thought before Ghazālī, see Weliur-Rahman, "The Psychology of Ibn-i-Sina," pp. 335–58.

to come his dwelling place, this present world his temporary stopping place,[17] the body his vehicle, and its members his servants.

So the perceptive part of man dwells in the heart, as a king in the midst of his kingdom. The imaginative faculty, whose seat is in the front of the brain,[18] acts as the master of his couriers, for the reports of sense perceptions (*maḥsūsāt*) are gathered therein. The faculty of retentive memory (*ḥāfiẓa*), whose seat is the back of the brain, acts as his storage keeper. The tongue is his interpreter and the active members of his body [are] his scribes. The five senses act as his spies, and he makes each one of them responsible in a certain domain. Thus he sets the eye over the world of colors, hearing over the world of sounds, smell over the world of odors, and so on for the others. These are the bearers of tidings that they collect from their different worlds and transmit to the imaginative faculty, which is like the master of the couriers. The latter in turn delivers them to the storage keeper, which is memory. The storage keeper sets them forth before the king, who selects therefrom that which he has need of in managing his kingdom, in completing the journey ahead of him, in subjugating his enemy by whom he is afflicted, and in warding off from himself those who cut off his path. If [the king] does this he is successful, happy, and thankful for the blessings of God, the Exalted. But if he neglects all of these things, or uses them for the welfare of his enemies, which are appetence, anger, and other transient pleasures, and in the building of his path instead of his abode—for this present world is his path through which he must pass, while his own country and his permanent abode is the world to come—then he is forsaken, wretched, ungrateful for the blessings of God, the Exalted, being one who makes ill use of the armies of God, the Exalted, and forsakes the party of God. So he deserves hatred and exile on the day of overturn[ing] and resurrection. May God protect us from such.

Kaʿb al-Aḥbār[19] referred to this example, which we have given, when he said, "I went to ʿĀʾisha[20] ﷺ and said to her, 'Man's eyes are a guide, his ears a funnel, his tongue an interpreter, his hands wings, his feet couriers,

17 Zabīdī reads 'path.'

18 This localization of the seat of the imaginative power was an older idea of Greek philosophers and was given new life by Ibn Sīnā; Brett, *Psychology*, 2:56.

19 Kaʿb al-Aḥbār, Abū Isḥāq b. Matīʿ b. Haisūʿ, was a Yemeni Jew, converted to Islam in the caliphate of Abū Bakr or ʿUmar. He was the oldest authority for Jewish–Muslim traditions; see *EI*, 2:582ff. *EI*², 4:316.

20 ʿĀʾisha b. Abī Bakr, the favorite wife of the Prophet; see *EI*, 1:216. *EI*², 1:307.

and the heart is his king. If the king enjoys good health, so also do his armies.'" She said, "Thus have I heard the Messenger of God ﷺ speak."[21]

ʿAlī[22] ﷺ also, in illustrating the heart of man, said, "Verily, God, the Exalted, in His earth has vessels, and they are the hearts of men. Those most beloved by Him, the Exalted, are the gentlest, the clearest, and the most robust."[23] Then he explained, saying, "The most robust in religion, the clearest in certainty, and the gentlest to the brethren." This is a reference to the statement of [God] the Exalted, *hard against the unbelievers and merciful among themselves* (48:29), and the statement of [God] the Exalted, *His light is like a niche within which is a lamp* (24:35). Ubayy b. Kaʿb[24] ﷺ said, "This means 'as the light of a believer and his heart.'" Again there is the statement of [God] the Exalted, *Or like the darkness in a vast deep ocean* (24:40), which is an illustration of the heart of the hypocrite. Zayd b. Aslam[25] said of the statement of [God] the Exalted, *in a preserved tablet* (85:22), "It is the heart of the believer." Sahl said, "The heart and the breast are like the throne and the seat." These then are the examples of the heart.



21 ʿIrāqī says that this *ḥadīth* was not authentic.

22 ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, the cousin of the Prophet and his son-in-law, was the fourth caliph; see *EI*, 1:283ff. *EI*², 1:381.

23 A weak *ḥadīth* quoted from Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb*.

24 Ubayy b. Kaʿb, a Helper (d. 22 or 30/643 or 650). He wrote down some of the prophetic revelation for Muḥammad. See Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *A Biographical Dictionary of Persons who knew Mohammed* (Calcutta, 1856), 1:30ff. Ibn Qutayba, *Ibn Coteiba's Handbuch der Geschichte*, ed. Ferdinand Wüstenfeld (Götingen: bei Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1850), p. 133.

25 Zayd b. Aslam al-ʿAdawī (d. 36/656) was a freedman of the caliph ʿUmar and a reliable *ḥadīth* scholar. Ibn Ḥajar, 2:39; Ibn al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-fihrist*, ed. Gustav Flügel (Leipzig: F. C. W. Vogel, 1871–2), pp. 23, 225.

Chapter 5

An Exposition Summarizing the Qualities and Similitudes of the Heart

KNOW THAT THERE ARE four mingled factors that dwell together in man's nature and make-up, and therefore four kinds of qualities are united against him. These are the qualities (*ṣifāt*) of the beasts of prey (*sabuʿiyya*), brutish qualities (*bahīmiyya*), demonic qualities (*shayṭāniyya*), and lordly qualities (*rabbāniyya*).

Insofar as anger rules over him he is overcome by the deeds of a beast of prey, such as enmity, detestation, and attacking people by beating and cursing them. Insofar as appetence rules him he is overcome by brutish acts of gluttony, greed, carnal desire, and so on. Insofar as there is within his soul something lordly, as God, the Exalted, has said, *The Spirit is my Lord's affair* (17:85), he claims lordship for himself and loves mastery, superiority, exclusiveness, and despotism in all things; and to be the sole ruler, and to slip away from the noose of servitude and humility. He longs to study all [branches] of knowledge, nay, rather he claims for himself knowledge and gnosis and the comprehension of the real nature of things. He rejoices when knowledge is attributed to him, and is grieved when accused of ignorance. The comprehension of all realities, and seeking to rule by force over all creatures are among the lordly qualities, and man is greedy for them. Insofar as he differs from the beasts in having the faculty of discernment, although sharing anger (*ghaḍab*) and appetence (*shahwa*) with them, he attains to demonic qualities. Thus he becomes wicked and uses his discernment in the discovery of ways of evil. He seeks to attain

his ends by guile, deceit, and cunning, and sets forth evil as though it were good. These are the characteristics of demons (*shayāṭīn*).

Every man has within him a mixture of these four qualities, i.e., lordly, demonic, beastly, and brutish; and all of these are gathered together in the heart. So there are gathered inside of a man's skin, as it were, a pig, a dog, a demon, and a sage. The pig is appetence, for the pig is not blamed for his color, his shape or appearance, but for his covetousness, his voracity, and his greed. The dog is anger, for the carniverous beast and the savage dog are not dog and beast from the standpoint of their appearance or color or shape, but because the spirit and meaning of this bestial quality is savagery and enmity and slaughter. Now within man there is the savagery and anger of the beast, and the greed and lechery (*shabaq*) of the pig. Thus the pig through gluttony invites man to excess and abomination, and the wild beast by means of anger calls him to oppression and harmful acts. The demon continues to stir up the appetite of the pig and the wrath of the wild beast, and to incite the one by means of the other; and he makes their inborn dispositions appear good to them.

The sage, who represents the intellect, is in duty bound to ward off the plotting and guile of the demon by revealing his deception by means of his [i.e., the sage's] penetrating insight and evident clear illumination; and to destroy the gluttony of this pig by setting the dog over him, for by means of anger he breaks down the assault of appetence. He wards off the savagery of the dog by setting the pig over him and bringing the dog in subjection under his rule. If he does this successfully his affairs are set right, equity is manifest in the kingdom of the body, and all proceeds on the straight path.

But if he is unable to overcome them they overcome him and bring him into servitude, and so he continues to seek crafty tricks and careful plans to satisfy his pig and please his dog. Thus he is constantly in servitude to a dog or a pig. This is the condition of the majority of mankind whenever their primary concern is for the belly, loins, and vying with the enemy. The strange thing is that he disapproves of idolators worshipping stones, whereas if the veil were removed and his true state were disclosed and his true condition set before him as it is set before mystics (*al-mukāshafūn*), either in sleep or when awake, he would see himself standing before a pig, now prostrating himself before him and again kneeling, awaiting his signal and his command. So whenever the pig is roused up to seek the satisfying of any of his appetites, the man is sent forth at once to serve him and to bring that for which he lusts. Or else the man would see himself standing before a savage dog worshipping him, obeying him and giving ear to his demands and requests, and carefully planning schemes to render obedience to him. Thus he endeavors to please his demon, for it is he who stirs up the pig and arouses the dog and sends them forth to bring [the man] into subjection. In this way he worships the demon in his worship of these two.

So let every servant watch over his times of activity and of inactivity, his silence and his speech, his rising up and his sitting down, and let him look to them with careful insight, and he will find, if he is honest with himself, nothing but an effort all day long to serve these base impulses. This is the utmost oppression, for it makes the possessor possessed, the lord lorded over, the master a slave, and the conqueror conquered, in that [man] forces the mind that is worthy of lordship, conquest, and rule to serve these low impulses. And undoubtedly from obedience to these three qualities are spread to the heart that are heaped up thereupon so that they become a dirty stain and a rust that is destructive and deadly to the heart.[1]

From obedience to the pig of appetence there result the following characteristics: shamelessness, wickedness, wastefulness, avarice, hypocrisy, defamation, wantonness, nonsense, greed, covetousness, flattery, envy, rancor, rejoicing at another's evil, and so on. As for obedience to the dog of anger there are spread thereby into the heart the qualities of rashness, squandering, haughtiness, boasting, hot temper, pride, conceit, sneering, disregard, despising of creatures, the will to evil, the lust of oppression, and others. In regard to obedience to the demon through obedience to appetence and anger, there results from it the qualities of guile, deceit, craftiness, cunning, deception, audacity,[2] dissembling, violence, fraud, mischief, obscenity, and such like.

But if the matter is reversed and man overcomes all these, bringing them under the rule of the lordly element within him, then his heart becomes the abode of such lordly qualities as knowledge, wisdom, certainty, the comprehension of the real nature of things, the knowledge of matters as they really are, the subjugation of all by the power of knowledge and insight, and worthiness to advance beyond all creatures because of the perfection and majesty of his knowledge. Then too he dispenses with the worship of appetence and anger, and, by holding in check the

1 Cf. Qur'ān 9:88, 94; 83:14.

2 The rest of this list is omitted in Zabīdī.

pig of appetence and returning him to his proper limits, he acquires such honorable qualities as chastity, contentment, quietness, abstemiousness, godliness, piety, happiness, goodly aspect, modesty, sagacity, helpfulness, and such like. By holding in check the power of anger and conquering it, and returning it to its proper limits, man attains to the qualities of courage, generosity, gallantry, self-control, patience, gentleness, endurance, pardoning, steadfastness, nobility, valor,[3] dignity, and others.

The heart is as a mirror that is surrounded by these factors which exert their influence upon it. These influences reach the heart in uninterrupted succession. The praiseworthy influences that we have mentioned add to the clearness, shining, illumination, and brightness of the mirror so that the clear statement of the Real[4] (*jalliyyat al-Ḥaqq*) shines therein, and there is revealed in it the real nature of the thing sought in religion. To such a heart as this is the reference of the Prophet ﷺ in his saying, "Whenever God wills good for a man He causes his heart to exhort him";[5] and in his saying ﷺ, "The man whose heart is his exhorter has a protector from God over him."[6] This is the heart in which there abides the remembrance (*dhikr*) [of God]. God, the Exalted said, *Verily in remembrance of God do hearts find rest!* (13:28).

The blameworthy influences are like a darkening smoke that rises up over the mirror of the heart and is heaped up upon it time after time until it becomes dark and murky and entirely veiled from God the Exalted. This is corrosion and rust. God, the Exalted, said, *Nay, but that which they have earned is rust upon their hearts* (83:14). He ﷻ also said, *if We will, We can affilict them in their sins, and imprint their hearts, so that they hear not* (7:100). Here He connected their lack of hearing with their being corroded by sins, even as He connected hearing with godly fear. He, the Exalted, said, *but fear God and listen* (5:108), and *fear God, and God teaches you* (2:282). Whenever sins are heaped up the heart is corroded, and thereupon it is blinded to the perception of reality and the correctness of [one's practice of] religion. It scorns the world to come and magnifies this present world, feeling concern for it alone. So if anything concerning the world to come and the dangers therein knocks at its hearing, it goes into one ear and out the other. It does not find an abode in the heart nor stir it to repentance

3 Zabīdī omits the last two of the list.

4 *Al-Ḥaqq*, God as the Absolute Reality.

5 ʿIrāqī says that the chain of narrators for this *ḥadīth* is good (*jayyid*).

6 ʿIrāqī says that he did not find a source for this *ḥadīth*.

and to make amends. These are they who despair of the world to come even as the infidels despair of those who are in their graves.[7] This is the meaning of the blackening of the heart by sins according to the statement of the Qurʾān and the Sunna.[8]

Maymūn b. Mihrān[9] said, "Whenever a man commits a sin he makes a black spot upon his heart, and whenever he turns away from it and repents, the spot is polished away, and if he returns to sin it increases until it covers the heart." This is rust. The Prophet ﷺ said, "The heart of the believer is stripped clean and a lamp shines therein, but the heart of the unbeliever is black and upside down."[10] Obedience to God, praise be to Him, by striving against the appetites polishes the heart, but disobedience to Him blackens it. So whoever engages in acts of disobedience blackens his heart; and whoever does a good deed after he has done an evil one, and thereby removes its effect, does not have his heart darkened, but its light is decreased. It is like a mirror which [one] breathes upon and then wipes off, and then breathes upon again and wipes off, which is not without a certain cloudiness.[11]

The Prophet ﷺ said, "There are four kinds of hearts:[12] a heart that is stripped clean, in which a lamp shines and this is the believer's heart; a heart that is black and upside down, which is the heart of the unbeliever; a hardened heart bound in its sheath of evil, which is the heart of the hypocrite; and a broad heart in which there is both belief and hypocrisy. Its belief is like green herbage that pure water causes to abound, and its hypocrisy is like an ulcer which purulent matter and pus cause to spread.

7 Cf. Qurʾān 60:13.

8 "Sunna," usage or way of life; see *EI*, 4:555ff. *EI*², 9:878. Zabīdī says in Qurʾān, 83:14; in the Sunna [editor's note: *ḥadīth* literature].

9 Maymūn b. Mihrān, Abū ʿAmr b. Mihrān al-Jazarī (d. 116 or 117/734 or 735), a Follower. He was a cloth merchant and tax collector under ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz. Ibn Qutayba, *Mukhtalaf al-ḥadīth*, p. 228; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Abū al-Maḥāsin Ibn Ṭagri Bardii Annales* [Nujūm al-zāhira fī mulūk Miṣr wa-l-Qāhira], ed. T. W. J. Juynboll and B. F. Matthes, 2 vols. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1851–5), 1:291, 308.

10 A part of the following *ḥadīth*; see the next note.

11 Editor's note: see Hamza Yusuf, trans., *Purification of the Heart* (Starlatch, 2004).

12 A *ḥadīth* given by Aḥmad from Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī, Wensinck, *Handbook*, p. 95a. Previously quoted in the *Iḥyāʾ*. Cf. Massignon, *Essai sur les Origines du Lexique Technique de la Mystique Musulmane* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1922), p. 138.

This heart is judged to belong to whichever of the two gains the mastery." Another reading is, "is carried away by whichever."

God, the Exalted, said, *Indeed, those who fear God, when a thought touches them from Satan, they remember [God] and at once they have insight* (7:201). Thus He stated that the clearness of the heart and its perspicacity are attained by the practice of remembrance (*dhikr*),[13] and none achieve this except those who fear Him. For the fear of God is the door to remembrance of Him; remembrance is the door to mystical unveiling (*kashf*);[14] and mystical unveiling is the door to the greatest success (*fawz*) which is the success of meeting (*liqāʾ*) God the Exalted.



13 *Dhikr*, often written *zikr*, includes the remembrance of the heart and the act of making mention with the tongue; see *EI*, 1:958. *EI²*, 2:223.

14 "Kashf," mystic unveiling; see *EI*, 2:787ff. *EI²*, 4:696.

Chapter 6

An Exposition of the Similitudes of the Heart as Related Specifically to Knowledge

KNOW THAT THE SEAT (*maḥall*) of knowledge (*ʿilm*) is the heart, by which I mean the subtle tenuous substance (*laṭīfa*) that rules all the parts of the body and is obeyed and served by all its members. In its relationship to the real nature of intelligibles (*maʿlūmāt*), it is like a mirror in its relationship to the forms (*ṣuwar*) of changing appearances (*mutalawwināt*). For even as that which changes has a form, and the image (*mithāl*) of that form is reflected in the mirror and represented therein, so also every intelligible has its specific nature, and this specific nature has a form that is reflected and made manifest in the mirror of the heart. Even as the mirror is one thing, the forms of individuals another, and the representation of their image in the mirror another, being thus three things in all, so here, too, there are three things: the heart, the specific natures of things, and the representation and presence of these in the heart. The 'intellect' (*al-ʿālim*) is an expression for the heart in which there exists the image of the specific natures of things. The 'intelligible' (*al-maʿlūm*) is an expression for the specific natures of things. 'Intelligence' (*al-ʿilm*) is an expression for the representation of the image in the mirror.

Even as the act of grasping, for example, requires that which grasps, such as the hand, and that which is grasped, such as the sword, and an act bringing together the sword and the hand by placing the sword in the hand, which is called the act of grasping, so also the coming of the image of the intelligible into the heart is called intelligence. The reality was in existence and so also the heart, but there was no intelligence present, for

intelligence is an expression for the coming of the reality into the heart. Similarly the sword was in existence and also the hand, but there was nothing named 'the act of grasping and taking' present because the sword had not actually come into the hand. It is true that 'grasping' is an expression for the presence of the sword itself in the hand, while the intelligible itself does not actually come into the heart. For fire itself does not actually come into the heart of one who knows fire, but that which is actually present is its definition and its real nature that corresponds to its form. So the comparison of [the heart] with the mirror is more apt, for man himself is not really present in the mirror, but there is present merely an image that corresponds to him, and thus the presence of an image in the heart corresponding to the real nature of the intelligible is called intelligence.[1]

The mirror may not reflect the forms for five reasons: first, a defect in its formation, as, for example, a piece of crude iron before it is turned and shaped and polished; second, because of its dirt and rust and dullness, even though it is perfect in formation; third, because it is turned away from the direction of the object toward something else, as, for example, if the object were behind the mirror; fourth, because of a veil placed between the mirror and the object; and fifth, because of ignorance of the direction of the object desired, so that it is impossible to place it in front of the position and direction of the object.

Thus too is the heart a mirror, ready to have reflected in it the true nature of reality in all things. Hearts are destitute of the knowledge that they lack only because of the following five reasons.

The first reason is an imperfection in its own nature, such as the heart of a youth that does not reflect intelligibles because of its imperfection.

The second reason is because of dullness that is a result of acts of disobedience, and the filth from many lusts that are heaped upon the face of the heart, for these prevent the purity and cleanness of heart. Reality ceases to be manifest therein in proportion to its darkness and the filth heaped upon it. To this the Prophet ﷺ referred in his statement, "When [a man] commits a sin something of his intelligence forsakes him and does not return to him again."[2] That is to say, there comes over his heart a dullness whose influence abides forever, even when his purpose is to follow it with a good deed that will erase it. But if he had done the good

1 Cf. the separated form or intellectus agens of Ibn Sīnā's doctrine of the intellect. Brett, *Psychology*, 2:57ff.

2 ʿIrāqī says that he did not find a source for this *ḥadīth*.

deed without the preceding evil deed, then the illumination of the heart would unquestionably have increased. However when the evil deed preceded [it], the value of the good deed was lost, although the heart was restored by it to its state previous to the evil deed, but its light was not increased thereby. This is an evident loss and an inescapable defect. The mirror that has been stained and then wiped off with a polishing cloth is not like that which has been wiped with the polisher to increase its clearness without any previous stain. So undertaking obedience to God and opposing the demands of the appetites is that which brightens the heart and purifies it. Therefore God, the Exalted, said, *And those who strive for Us—We will surely guide to Our ways* (29:69). The Prophet ﷺ said, "God causes him who does the best he knows to become the heir to knowledge that he knows not."[3]

The third reason is that the heart may be turned away from the direction of reality which is sought. For the heart of the good and obedient man, although it is bright, does not have the clear statement of the Real revealed in it, for he does not seek the Real and does not have his mirror opposite to the direction of the thing sought. Perhaps all of his attention is taken up by the details of bodily submission or arranging the means of his livelihood, and his thought is not free to contemplate the Lordly Presence and the hidden divine realities. So there is revealed to him only that which he thinks about, whether it is the minute defects of his [religious] works or the hidden faults of the soul, if it is these which occupy his mind, or the interests of gaining a livelihood if he thinks of them. Now if limiting one's attention to works and the details of acts of obedience prevents the revelation of the clearness of the Real, what is your estimation (*ẓann*)[4] of one who expends his energies in the lusts and pleasures of this present world and the things connected therewith? And how should true revelation not be denied to such a person?

The fourth reason is the veil. The obedient man who has overcome his appetites and devotes himself exclusively to a certain specific reality may not have this revealed to him because it is veiled from him by some belief that he has held from his youth, and which he has blindly followed (*taqlīd*) and accepted in good faith. This belief walls him off from the true nature of the Real and prevents there being revealed to his heart

3 A weak *ḥadīth* quoted from Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb*; it precedes in *Iḥyāʾ*, 1:63.

4 See Wolfson, "Internal Senses," p. 93n.; also Weliur-Rahman, "The Psychology of Ibn-i-Sina," p. 354.

anything contrary to the strict interpretation of the doctrines that he has blindly accepted. This too is a great veil that overshadows most Muslim theologians (*mutakallimūn*)[5] and those who are zealous followers of the schools (*madhāhib*),[6] and indeed most righteous men who think upon the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, for they are veiled by their blindly followed creeds that are hardened in their souls and firmly fixed in their hearts, and have become a veil between them and the perception of realities.

The fifth reason is ignorance of the direction from which the knowledge of the thing sought must be obtained. For the seeker after knowledge cannot obtain knowledge of that which is unknown except by recalling the knowledge that is related to what he desires, so that when he recalls it and arranges it within himself in a special order, to which the learned give the name of 'process of deduction' (*ṭarīq al-iʿtibār*), he will then have found the direction of the thing sought, and its true nature will be clearly revealed to his heart. For the things that are not instinctive, which one desires to know, cannot be caught save in the net of acquired knowledge;. indeed no item of knowledge is acquired except from two preceding items of knowledge that are related and combined in a special way, and from their combination a third item of knowledge is gained.[7] This is like the result of the union of a stallion and a mare. Here even as he who wishes to produce a mare cannot do so from donkey, cow, nor man, but from a special source, from male and female horses, and this if there takes place a special union; so also every item of knowledge has two special sources and a way for their combination, and from this combination there is gained the derived item of knowledge that is sought. Ignorance of these sources and of the inner aspect of combining them is what prevents understanding. An example of this already mentioned is the ignorance of the direction in which the object is.

Another example is that of a man who desires to see the back of his neck in a mirror. If he holds up the mirror in front of his face he does not have it placed opposite to the position of the back of the neck, and the back of his neck does not appear in it. If he holds it behind the back of his neck and facing it, he has turned the mirror away from his eyes and so cannot see either the mirror or the reflection of the back of his neck in it. So he

5 "Mutakallimūn," theologians; see *EI*, 2:672ff. *EI*², "ʿilm al-kalām," 3:1141.

6 Generally the four Sunnī schools of law: Mālikī, Shāfiʿī, Ḥanafī, and Ḥanbalī. See *EI*, 2:104ff; cf. also 4:252. *EI*², "madhhab," 12:551.

7 The reference is to the syllogism.

needs another mirror to place behind the back of his neck, with the first mirror facing it in such a way that he can see it, and he must observe the proper relationship between the placing of the two mirrors so that the image of the back of his neck is reflected in the mirror opposite to it, and the image of this mirror is reflected in the other mirror that faces the eye. Then the eye perceives the image of the back of his neck. So in the hunt for knowledge there are strange ways in which there are devious turnings and oblique shiftings, stranger than those we have mentioned concerning the mirror; and rare indeed upon the face of the earth is he who is guided to the way of clearly seeing through those devious ways.

These are the reasons that prevent the heart from coming to know the real nature of things. Otherwise every heart is innately able to come to know realities, for it is a lordly and noble thing, differing from other substances in the world by this special property and noble quality. To it is the reference in the statement of [God] ﷻ, *Indeed, We offered the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they declined to bear it, but man [undertook to] bear it* (33:72). This refers to his possession of a special characteristic that distinguishes him from the heavens, the earth, and the mountains, by which he is enabled to bear the trust of God the Exalted. This trust is gnosis and divine unity (*tawḥīd*).[8]

The heart of every human being is, [in its original constitution], able and capable of bearing this trust, but the causes that we have mentioned prevent it from carrying this burden and arriving at the realization of the trust. In this connection the Prophet ﷺ said, "Every child is born with a natural conformity to religious truth (i.e., of Islam, *fiṭra*), and it is only his parents who make him a Jew or a Christian or a Magian."[9] The Messenger of God ﷺ also said, "Were it not that the demons hover over the hearts of the children of Adam they would turn their eyes toward the heavenly

8 *Tawḥīd*. Jurjānī, *al-Taʿrīfāt*, p. 73, says that *tawḥīd* consists in: experientially knowing God's lordship; declaring His unity; and denying that there is any other like Him. The term is thus practically synonymous with Muslim 'theology' in the narrower sense of that term. See *EI*, 1:306, 2:704. *EI*², 10:389. See also Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn: Kitāb al-tawḥīd wa'l-tawakkul*, trans. David Burrell, *Faith in Divine Unity and Trust in Divine Providence* (Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 2001).

9 Lane, *Lexicon*, p. 2416, says, "Every infant is born in a state of conformity to the natural constitution with which he is created in his mother's womb, either prosperous or unprosperous (in relation to the soul)." See also 'fiṭra,' *EI*, 2:115ff. *EI*², 2:931. This is a *ḥadīth* from Abū Hurayra related by all. Wensinck, *Handbook*, p. 43[illegible].

kingdom."[10] This is a reference to some of these hindrances, which are the veil between the heart and the kingdom.

To this also is the reference in the *ḥadīth* that has come down from Ibn ʿUmar[11]﵁. He said, "The Messenger was asked, 'O Messenger of God, where is God in the earth or in heaven?' He replied, 'In the hearts of His believing creatures.'"[12] There is also a narration [*ḥadīth qudsī*] that God, the Exalted, said, "My earth cannot contain me, neither my heaven, but the tender and calm heart of my servant can contain Me."[13]

Another narration says that the Messenger of God was asked, "Who are the best of men?"

He replied, "Every believer whose heart is cleansed."

They asked, "What is the cleansed heart?"

He answered, "It is the godfearing, pure heart, in which there is no fraud, nor iniquity, nor treachery, nor rancor, nor envy."[14]

On that account ʿUmar[15]﵁ said, "My heart saw my Lord when, because of godly fear, He raised the veil." For whomsoever the veil is lifted between himself and God,[16] the form of the material world (*al-mulk*) and of the world of spirits (*al-malakūt*) is clearly manifest in his heart, and he sees a Garden the width of a part of which is that of the heavens and the earth. Its total expanse is greater than the heavens and the earth, for 'the heavens and the earth' is only an expression for the visible material world, which, although broad in extent and far-reaching in compass, is still but a part of the whole. But the world of spirits is boundless, consisting of those secrets hidden from the sight of the eyes and perceived only by insight. It is true that only a part of it appears to the heart, but in itself and in its relation to the knowledge of God it is infinite. The material world and the world of spirits taken together under one classification are called the

10 A very uncertain *ḥadīth*, possibly confused with that mentioned on page 27, says ʿIrāqī.

11 Ibn ʿUmar, ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (d. 73/692), a Companion and the son of the second caliph; see *EI*, 1:28ff. *EI²*, "ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb," 1:53.

12 A *ḥadīth* given in Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb* and Qushayrī, *al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya;* ʿIrāqī says that he did not locate a source with this exact wording.

13 ʿIrāqī says that he did not find a source for this *ḥadīth.*

14 ʿIrāqī says that the chain of narrators for this *ḥadīth* is authentic (*ṣaḥiḥ*), given by Ibn Māja from ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar. Wensinck, *Concordance*, 2:78b.

15 ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (d. 23/644) was the second caliph; see *EI*, 3:982ff. *EI²*, 10:818.

16 Zabīdī text reads, 'between himself and his heart.'

Lordly Presence (*al-ḥadra al-rubūbiyya*),[17] for the Lordly Presence encompasses all existing things. For there exists nothing except God, the Exalted, His works, and His Kingdom; and His servants are a part of His works.[18] What appears of this to the heart is, according to some, Paradise[19] itself, and according to the people of reality (*ahl al-ḥaqq*),[20] it is the means of deserving Paradise. The extent of his possession in Paradise is in proportion to[21] the extent of his knowledge and the measure to which God and His attributes and works have been revealed to him.

The intent of all of these acts of obedience and actions of the members is the purification, improvement, and enlightenment of the heart. *Prosperous is he who purifies it* (91:9). The purpose of improvement is to achieve the illumination of faith in it; I mean the shining of the light of knowledge [of God]. That is the point in the statement of the Exalted, *Whomsoever God wants to guide, He expands his breast to [accept] Islam* (6:125); and in His statement, *So is one whose breast God has expanded to [accept] Islam, and he is upon light from his Lord* [like one whose heart rejects it] (39:22). This illumination and this faith have indeed three degrees. The first degree is the faith of the rank and file, which is purely blind imitation (*taqlīd*).[22] The second is the faith of the theologians (*mutakallimīn*), which is mingled with a sort of logical reasoning but its degree is nearly the same as that of the faith of the rank and file. The third degree is the faith of the mystics (*ʿārifūn*), which is seeing [clearly] with the light of certainty.[23]

17 "Ḥadra," *EI*, 2:207. *EI²*, 3:51.

18 Zabīdī gives another reading: "and His Kingdom is made up of His servants and His works" (*Itḥāf*, 7:235) This passage is an assertion of the unity of God, the Self-existent One, which also guards against the possibility of there being anything in the universe that owes its existence to other than Him.

19 "Djanna," *EI*, 1:1014ff. *EI²*, 2:447.

20 *Ahl al-ḥaqq*, a general term for Muslim mystics, 'the followers of reality,' according to the usage here by Ghazālī. See Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1914), p. 1.

21 Zabīdī reads, 'because of.'

22 "Taqlīd," faith based on acceptance of custom and authority; see *EI*, 4:630ff. *EI²*, 10:137.

23 Zabīdī gives a further analysis of these degrees of faith, taken from other writings of Ghazālī. The first two are from Ghazālī, *Iljām al-ʿawāmm ʿan ʿilm al-kalām* (Cairo, 1309/1891) and the third from *Mishkāt al-anwār* (Cairo 1322/1904). Also see W. H. T. Gairdner, "Al-Ghazālī's Mishkāt al-Anwār and the Ghazālī Problem," *Der Islam* 5, no. 2 (1914), pp. 121–53. The first degree of faith, or that of the rank and

We will make clear to you these degrees, with an example, your acceptance that Zayd, for instance, is in the house. This has three degrees. The first is that someone has told you, someone whom you have experienced to be truthful, and never known to lie and never doubted his word. Your heart, by the mere hearing, calmly receives his report and is satisfied with it. This is belief by mere blind acceptance, and of such nature is the faith of the rank and file. For when they reached the age of discrimination they heard from their fathers and mothers of the existence of God, the Exalted, of His knowledge, will, and power, and the rest of His attributes; also of the sending of the messengers and their veracity, and their message.[24] They received even as they heard and became established therein and satisfied therewith; and it never occurred to their minds to disagree with what their fathers and mothers and teachers told them because of the high esteem in which they held them. This faith is the efficient cause of salvation in the world to come, and those who embrace it are in the first [i.e., lowest] ranks of the people of the right hand,[25] but not among those who are drawn near [to God]. For this [faith] has in it no mystical unveiling, nor insight, nor

file, is blind imitation. It comes through: (1) hearing the doctrine from someone who is an authority worthy of trust, as a child trusts a parent or teacher; (2) hearing, in convincing circumstances, something known about previously; (3) hearing a doctrine that appeals to the nature of the individual, which is the weakest of all types of faith. The faith of the theologians is the second degree, and it is mingled with some logical reasoning. It may be (1) belief resting on complete proof that has been worked out step by step, which is the highest rank of this sort; or (2) belief resting on the well-known stock arguments of leading teachers; or (3) belief resting on written proofs, such as those used in debates and correspondence. The third degree of faith, which is that of mystics, is seeing with the light of certainty. (1) It is belief that all other than God has no essential existence, but has only contingent and figurative existence. Man, therefore, is the absolute possession of the One Unique Ruler who has no partner. (2) This is followed by advancement from the level of the figurative to an ascent to the summit of reality, until a clear vision is experienced that the face of God is the One Existence, and all else is eternally perishing. Cf. Qurʾān 28:68. (3) After attaining the heaven of reality there is no existence seen save God and the believer is devoid of all feeling of self or of other than God, and is lost in contemplation of Him. This state, in which a 'passing away' (*fanāʾ*) takes place, is an experience of the divine Unity (*tawḥīd*). Editor's note: see also Abū Jaʿfar al-Ṭaḥāwī, *The Creed of Imam al-Ṭaḥāwī*, trans. Hamza Yusuf (Zaytuna Institute, 2007).

24 Zabīdī text reads, "the Messenger, his veracity, and his message" (7:238).

25 Cf. Qurʾān 56:26.

enlargement of the breast by the light of certainty, since it is possible for there to be an error in what is heard from individuals, nay, indeed, from groups, in that which pertains to creed. The hearts of Jews and Christians are also satisfied with what they hear from their fathers and mothers, only their belief is a mistaken one because an error has been passed on to them. Muslims believe the truth, not because they have studied it, but because the word of truth has been passed on to them.

The second degree of belief is that you hear the words and voice of Zayd from within the house, but from behind a wall, and you deduce from this the fact of his being in the house. Then your belief, your acceptance as true, and your certainty that he is in the house are stronger than your belief through hearsay alone. For if you are told, "He is in the house," and then hear his voice, you become more certain of it, for the voice indicates shape and form to him who hears it, on condition of seeing the form. So his heart judges this to be the voice of that person. This is belief mingled with proof. It is also possible for error to follow because one voice might resemble another. Also pretense is possible by means of imitating the voice. This might not occur to the mind of the hearer, for he had no thought of any such accusation, or that anyone had a purpose in such deception and imitation.

The third degree of belief is to enter the house and look at him with your own eyes and see him. This is real experiential knowledge and sure observation. It is like the knowledge of those who are drawn near [to God] and of the veracious (*ṣiddīqūn*), for their belief is based on eyewitness [account]. This belief includes that of the rank and file and that of the theologians; and they have this very evident additional advantage that the possibility of error is taken away. It is true that believers of this class differ in rank according to their attainments in knowledge, and the degrees of unveiling. An example of the difference in degrees of knowledge is that one man sees Zayd in the house when he is near at hand in the courtyard and while the sun is shining, and so he sees him perfectly; while another sees him in a room, or at a distance, or in the evening, so that his form is sufficiently plain that he can be sure that it is he, but the minute details and hidden features of his form are not made clear to him. The variance in degree in seeing divine things is of this sort. Regarding the difference in the attainments of knowledge, it is as though one sees Zayd, ʿAmr, Bakr, and others in the house, while another sees Zayd only. The knowledge of

the former is unquestionably greater than that of the latter because of the abundance of things known.

This is the state of the heart in relation to knowledge, and God, the Exalted, knows best that which is right.



Chapter 7

An Exposition of the Condition of the Heart as Related to the Categories of Knowledge: Intellectual, Religious, Worldly, and Otherworldly

KNOW THAT THE HEART is innately prepared to apprehend the real nature of ideas as has been stated previously. But the kinds of knowledge that exist in it may be divided into those which pertain to the intellect, and those which pertain to divine law. Intellectual knowledge (*ʿulūm ʿaqliyya*) is subdivided into axiomatic (*ḍarūriyya*) and acquired (*muktasaba*) [knowledge]. Acquired [knowledge] is further divided into that which deals with this [present] world, and with the world to come. By intellectual knowledge we mean that by which the innate intellect makes its judgments and which does not come into existence through blind imitation and instruction. It is divided into axiomatic and acquired [knowledge]. No one knows whence or how the axiomatic is attained. Such is a man's knowledge [for example], that one person cannot be in two places, and that one thing cannot be both created and eternal, existent and nonexistent at the same time. For man finds this knowledge to be a natural endowment of his soul from his youth, and does not know when or whence he attained it. I mean that he does not know any proximate cause for it. Otherwise it would not be hidden from him that it is God who has created him and guided him aright. Acquired knowledge is that which is gained by learning and deduction. Both of these are sometimes called intellectual. ʿAlī ﷺ said, "I beheld the intellect as though it were twofold: innately endowed, and developed through instruction. That

which is developed through instruction is of no avail, apart from the innate endowment, even as the sun is of no avail apart from a seeing eye."[1]

The first of these is referred to in the saying of [the Prophet] ﷺ to ʿAlī, "God certainly has not created anything more honorable to Him than the intellect."[2] The second is referred to in his ﷺ statement to ʿAlī ﵁ "Then men draw near to God by different kinds of good deeds; you draw near by your intellect."[3] For it is not possible to draw near by innate constitutional endowment, nor by axiomatic knowledge, but by that which is acquired. In ʿAlī's ﵁ case, he was able to draw near by using his intellect to acquire the knowledge for which close proximity to the Lord of the worlds is bestowed. The heart is like the eye, and the innate intelligence in it is like the potentiality of sight in the eye. The potentiality of sight is a subtlety which is lost in blindness, but which is present in sight, even though a man may have closed his eyes or the darkness of night may have enfolded him. The knowledge attained thereby in the heart is like the potentiality of perception of sight in the eye, and its vision of the essences of things. The fact that knowledge is held back from the eye of the intellect during youth until the age of discretion and maturity is like the holding back of the vision from the sight until the time when the sun shines with its flood of light upon the objects of the sight.

The pen with which God has written knowledge upon the pages of the heart is like the disk of the sun. Knowledge is not achieved within the heart of the youth before the age of discretion only because the tablet of his heart is not yet prepared to receive the engraving of knowledge. The pen (*al-qalam*)[4] is a term for one of the creations of God, the Exalted, which He has made a cause by which knowledge is inscribed upon the

1 This quotation is in poetic form and might be reproduced approximately as follows:

Man's mind a twofold intellect appears:
  The one instinctive; the other what he hears
That which is heard avails naught, save when joined
  To that which is instinctive in the mind.
Just as the sun which shines in the sky
  is of no worth without a seeing eye.

2 A *ḥadīth* quoted by Tirmidhī al-Ḥakīm (*Nawādir al-uṣūl*), which ʿIrāqī says has a weakness (*ḍaʿf*) in the chain of narrators. For Zabīdī's discussion of this and the following *ḥadīth* see *Itḥāf*, 1:461ff.

3 ʿIrāqī says that there is a weakness (*ḍaʿf*) in the chain of narrators of this *ḥadīth*.

4 "Qalam (kalam)," pen; see *EI*, 2:675ff. *EI²*, 4:471.

hearts of men. God, the Exalted, said, *Who taught by the pen, taught man that which he knew not* (96:4–5). The pen of God, the Exalted, does not resemble the pen of His creatures, even as His description does not resemble the characterization of His creation. Thus His pen is not made from a reed nor from a piece of wood, even as He Himself is not made up of substance (*jawhar*)[5] nor of accident (*ʿaraḍ*).[6]

So the comparison between the inner insight and the outer vision is valid from these points of view, save that there is no comparison between them in honor. For the inner insight is the very soul itself, which is the subtlety that perceives. This is like the rider, and the body like his mount; and blindness in the rider is more dangerous to the rider than blindness in his mount. Indeed there is no relation between the one affliction and the other, nor any comparison of the inner insight with the outer vision. God, the Exalted, has called it by its name, for He said, *The heart lied not [about] what it saw* (53:11), thus calling the perception of the mind a vision (*ruʾya*). Like this is the statement of the Exalted, *Thus did we show Abraham the realm of the heavens and the earth* (6:75). In this He did not mean the outer vision of the eye, for that was not granted exclusively to Abraham ﵇ that it should be set forth as having been a special favor. Therefore the non-perception is called blindness. The Exalted said, *For it is not eyes which are blind, but blinded are the hearts which are within the breasts* (22:46). And again, the Exalted said, *And whoever in this life is blind, will be blind in the hereafter, and more astray in way* (17:72). This is the exposition of intellectual knowledge.

Now, as regards the religious sciences, they are taken by way of acceptance on authority (*taqlīd*) from the prophets (*anbiyāʾ*), on whom be the peace and blessings of God. This is acquired by learning the Book of God, the Exalted, and the Sunna of the Messenger of God, ﷺ and understanding their meaning after having heard them. In this is the heart made perfect in quality and safe from illness and disease. For the intellectual sciences, although needed by the heart, are not sufficient for its safety, just as the intellect is not sufficient to make continuous the causes of physical health, but needs also to gain the experiential knowledge of the properties of

5 "Jawhar," substance in the philosophic sense; see *EI*, 1:1027ff.; *EI²*, 2:493. Harry A. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of Spinoza*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1934), 1:64n2.

6 "ʿAraḍ," an accident that exists in a substance; see *EI*, 1:417. *EI²*, 1:603.

medicines and herbs by learning them from the doctors (*aṭibbāʾ*)[7] and not by reading in books, since the intellect alone cannot find this knowledge. But after it is heard it cannot be understood except by means of the intellect. Thus the intellect cannot dispense with instruction [lit. hearing], nor can instruction dispense with the intellect.

So he who is a proponent of mere blind imitation and of setting aside the intellect entirely is ignorant; and he who is satisfied with the intellect alone, without the light of the Qurʾān and the Sunna, is deluded. Take care that you be not in either of these two groups, but be one who unites the two sources. For the intellectual sciences are like foods, and the sciences of religious law are as medicines. The sick person is harmed by food whenever he neglects the medicine. Thus the diseases of the heart can be treated only by the medicines derived from the religious law (*sharīʿa*),[8] which are the offices of the rites of worship and the works set by the prophets, on whom be the blessings of God, for the reformation of hearts. So he who does not treat his sick heart by the use of ritual worship, but is content to use the intellectual sciences alone, is harmed thereby, even as the sick man is harmed by food.

The supposition of those who think that the intellectual sciences are opposed to the sciences of religious law and that it is impossible to bring them together in harmony, is a supposition that arises from blindness in the eye of insight. We take refuge in God from it. But often such a man finds some of the sciences of religious law contradictory to others and is unable to harmonize them, so he supposes that there is a contradiction in religion and is perplexed thereby, and he withdraws from religion as a hair is withdrawn from dough. This is only because his own impotence has caused him to imagine an inconsistency in [our] religion. How far that is from the truth! He is indeed like a blind man who entered a house and there stumbled over some of the vessels of the house and said, "What are these vessels doing in the path; why are they not put in their place?" They answered him, "Those vessels are in their place, but you did not find the way because of your blindness. How strange it is of you not to blame your stumbling on your blindness, but rather to blame it upon the negligence of someone else." This is the relationship between religious and intellectual sciences.

7 "Aṭibbāʾ," doctors of medicine; see "ṭibb," *EI*, 4:740ff. *EI*², 10:451.

8 "Sharīʿa," *EI*, 4:320ff. *EI*², 9:321.

The intellectual sciences are divided into those of the present world and those of the world to come. Those of this present world are such sciences as medicine, mathematics, engineering, astronomy, and the other professions and trades. Those of the world to come are such as the knowledge of the states of the heart, of defects in religious works, and of the knowledge of God, the Exalted, and His attributes and His acts, as we have explained in the *Book of Knowledge*. These two sciences exist in tension, by which I mean that whoever applies himself to one of them and goes deeply into it has his insight into the other lessened for the most part.

ʿAlī ﷺ has given three similes of this present world and the world to come. He said, "They are like the two scales of the balance; and like the East and the West; and like a man's two wives, for when he makes the one content he makes the other angry." So you see those who are wise in the affairs of the present world, in medicine, mathematics, engineering, and philosophy, are ignorant in the affairs of the world to come. Similarly those who are wise in the minutiae of the sciences of the world to come are ignorant, for the most part, of the sciences of this present world; for the power of the intellect cannot accomplish the two things together, as a general rule. Thus one of them obstructs the perfection of the second. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Most of the inhabitants of Paradise are simpletons (*bulh*)."[9] That is, they are simpletons in the things of this present world. Ḥasan[10] said in one of his exhortations, "We perceived a group, which if you saw them, you would say that they are mad; and if they saw you, they would say that you are demons."

So whenever you hear about a strange thing in the field of religion, which people wise in the sciences deny, do not let their denial delude you so that you do not accept it; for it is impossible for one who walks the eastern path to possess [goods] that exist [only] in the West. So also is the case with this present world and that which is to come. The Exalted said, *Those who rest not their hope on their meeting with Us, but are pleased and satisfied with the life of the present [and feel secure therein and those who are heedless of Our signs]* (10:7). Again, the Exalted said, *They know but the outer (things) in the life of this world, but of the End of things they are heedless* (30:7). And again, He ﷻ said, *So turn away from whoever turns his back on Our message and desires not except the worldly life. This*

9 Zabīdī says this is a weak and generally denied (*munkar*) *ḥadīth*.

10 Ḥasan b. Abū al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (21–110/642–728), a prominent and learned scholar and pious ascetic; see *EI*, 2:273. *EI*², 3:247.

is their sum of knowledge (53:29–30). So to combine a complete attentive observance of the affairs of this present world and of religion is rarely easy, save to those whom God has firmly established for the direction of His servants in their livelihood and their return [to God]. Such are the prophets who are helped by the holy spirit,[11] who receive divine power sufficient for all things, nor does it fall short at all. But when the hearts of creatures are given over completely to that which pertains to this present world, they turn aside from the world to come and fall short of coming to perfection therein.



11 This is apparently an extension of the teaching in the Qur'ān about the supernatural aid given to ʿĪsā (2:81, 254; 5:109), so as to include all the prophets. The meaning of the term 'holy spirit' here is probably explained by the words that follow, 'divine power sufficient for all things.' On the above passages, Bayḍāwī gives this as one meaning of the 'holy spirit,' another of course, being Jibrīl. See also "Nafs," *EI*. *EI²*, 7:880.

Chapter 8

An Exposition of the Difference between General Inspiration (*ilhām*) and Learning (*taʿallum*); and the Difference between the Sufi Way of Seeking the Unveiling of Reality and the Way of the Speculative Theologians (*nuẓẓār*)

KNOW THAT THE SCIENCES that are not axiomatic, but which come into the heart at certain times, differ in their manner of attainment. Sometimes they come upon the heart as though something were flung into it from a source it knows not.[1] At other times they are gained through deduction (*istidlāl*) and study. That which is not attained by way of acquisition nor through artful proof is called general inspiration (*ilhām*), and that which is attained through inference is called reflection (*iʿtibār*) and mental perception (*istibṣār*). Furthermore that which exists in the heart apart from some expedient or cunning or effort on the part of man is subdivided into two classes. In the first the servant is not aware how he achieved it, nor whence; in the second he is acquainted with the

1 For a close and interesting parallel see the statement of Philo quoted in Brett, *Psychology*, 1:249, here given in part: " … and sometimes when I come to my work empty, I have suddenly become full, ideas being in an invisible manner showered upon me and implanted in me from on high; so that through the influence of Divine Inspiration I have become greatly excited, and have known neither the place in which I was nor those who were present, nor myself, nor what I was saying, nor what I was writing."

secondary cause (*sabab*)[2] from which he has derived that knowledge, which is the vision of the angel who casts it into his heart. The former is called general inspiration, and inbreathing into the heart (*nafth fi-l-rawʿ*). The latter is called prophetic inspiration (*waḥy*),[3] and it is an exclusive characteristic of the prophets (*anbiyāʾ*), whereas the former is given only to the saints (*awliyāʾ*) and the pure (*aṣfiyāʾ*). The preceding type, which is gained through deduction, is that given to the learned (*ʿulamāʾ*).[4]

The true doctrine is that the heart has the capacity to have revealed in it the true nature of reality in all things. But this is prevented by the intervention of the five aforementioned causes. These are as a veil that hangs down between the mirror of the heart and the Preserved Tablet (*al-lawh al-maḥfūẓ*),[5] which is engraved with all that God has decreed until the day of resurrection. The reflection of the real nature of knowledge from the mirror of the Tablet upon the mirror of the heart is like the reflection of an image from one mirror to another mirror opposite it. The veil between the two mirrors is sometimes removed by the hand, and at other times by a gust of wind that moves it. Thus the winds of divine favor sometimes blow and the veils are drawn aside from the eyes of hearts so that there is reflected in them something of that which is written upon the Preserved Tablet. Sometimes this takes place during sleep, and thereby there is revealed (*yuʿlim*) that which will come into being in the future. The veil is completely lifted by death, when the covering is withdrawn. At other times [inspiration] is made during waking hours and the veil is lifted by a secret favor from God, the Exalted, and some of the marvels of knowl-

2 "Sabab," secondary cause; see *EI*, *Supp*. pp. 191ff. *EI²*, 8:666.

3 "Waḥy," prophetic inspiration; see *EI*, 4:1091ff. *EI²*, 11:53. Zabīdī (7:245) gives six varieties of *waḥy*, as follows: (1) that which comes as the ringing of a bell; (2) that in which an angel appears and addresses man; (3) visions in sleep; (4) that which is cast into the heart; (5) Jibrīl comes (to the Prophet) in his true form, having six hundred wings, each one of which fills the horizon; (6) God speaks to him directly as He did the night of the heavenly journey. This is the highest sort.

4 "ʿUlamāʾ," the learned; see *EI*, 4:994. *EI²*, 10:801. Zabīdī says (7:245), in commenting on this, that there are three kinds of *ʿilm* mentioned by Ibn al-ʿArabī, as follows: (1) intellectual knowledge, whether axiomatic or rationally proven; (2) knowledge of states, which is learned only through experience; and (3) knowledge of secrets, which is above the intellect, and is received only through the inbreathing of the holy spirit.

5 See "al-lawḥ al-maḥfūẓ," *EI*, 3:19ff.; *EI²*, "lawḥ," 5:698. also Wensinck, *Gazālī's Cosmology*, pp. 16ff.

edge glisten in the heart from behind the curtain of the unknown. This may be like a dazzling flash of lightning, or it may be continuous up to a certain point, but its continuance is most rare. Inspiration (*ilhām*) then does not differ from acquisition as regards the knowledge itself, its seat, and its cause, but it differs only in the removal of the veil, for this is not accomplished by man's volition. General inspiration does not differ from prophetic inspiration in any of these respects, but only in the matter of the vision of the angel who imparts the knowledge; for our hearts attain knowledge only by means of the angels.[6] To this the Exalted refers in the statement, *And it is not for any human being that God should speak to him except by revelation or from behind a partition or that He sends a messenger to reveal, by His permission, what He wills* (42:51).

If you have come to know this, know also that the inclination of the Sufis is toward the knowledge gained through inspiration, more than that gained through instruction. Therefore they do not jealously covet the study of knowledge, nor the acquisition of that which authors have written, nor discussion about the statement of [doctrines] and proofs that have been mentioned. But they say, "The way of knowledge is to put foremost spiritual striving, to abolish blameworthy traits, to cut all ties, and to advance toward God, the Exalted, with utmost concern." Whenever this takes place, God becomes the ruler over the heart of His creature and the surety for his illumination with the light of knowledge. When God becomes the ruler of the heart, He floods it with mercy and sheds His light upon it, and the breast is opened and there is revealed to it the secret of the world of spirits (*malakūt*),[7] and by a gift of mercy there is cleared away from the surface of the heart the veil of whiteness[8] that blinds its eye, and there shines in it the real nature of divine things.

6 Zabīdī (7:246) says that knowledge is gained in the following ways: (1) through intuitive intelligence and sense contact; (2) through sight, based on intellectual or sensible premises; (3) through the report of others, hearing, or reading; (4) through inspiration (*waḥy*), (4a) through the tongue of an angel who can be seen, (4b) by hearing the voice of an angel without seeing him, or (4c) through a casting into the heart, either during waking hours or when asleep.

7 Zabīdī says that this elevation above the world of sense is the first ascent (*al-miʿrāj al-awwal*) of the traveler on the mystic's path.

8 *Ghurra*—whiteness. The reference is probably to the white leucoma which so often causes loss of sight in eastern lands.

The servant[9] has only to make himself ready by a thorough purification, by summoning intention along with a sincere desire, by complete yearning, and by watching with constant expectation for the mercy that God, the Exalted, may grant to him. For prophets and saints have had divine things revealed to them, and the light has flooded their breasts, not by learning and study and the writing of books, but by asceticism (*zuhd*)[10] in this present world, by cutting the self off from all of its ties, by emptying the heart of all of its busying affairs, and by advancing with the utmost concern toward God, the Exalted; for whoever belongs to God, God belongs to him.

The [Sufis] assert that the way to this is, first of all, by cutting off ties with this present world and by emptying the heart of them, by taking away concern for family, possessions, children, homeland, knowledge, rule, and rank. Nay rather he must bring his heart into that state in which the existence of all these is the same as their nonexistence.[11] Then he must withdraw alone, apart, into a place of private devotion (*zāwiya*),[12] and limit himself to the prescribed religious duties (*farāʾiḍ*)[13] and the supererogatory prayers (*rawātib*).[14] He must sit with an empty heart and concentrated purpose. He must not divide his thought by reciting the Qurʾān, nor the contemplation of its exposition, nor by books of *ḥadīth*, nor anything else. But he must strive [such] that nothing save God, the Exalted, shall come into his mind. Then after he has seated himself in a place apart (*khalwa*) he shall keep saying continuously with his tongue, "Allāh, Allāh," and his heart shall be fixed on it too, until he comes finally to a state in which the motion of the tongue will cease and it will seem as though the word is flowing over his tongue. He must continue patiently in this until every trace of the word is effaced from the tongue and he finds his heart persevering in this devotional exercise (*dhikr*). Still he shall persevere until the form and letters of the expression and the very appearance of the word is

9 Editor's note: Skellie has 'novice (*murīd*)' here, from Zabīdī, *Itḥāf* (7:246). He then refers the reader to "murīd," novice or neophyte; see *EI*, 3:735. *EI²*, 7:608.

10 "Zuhd," asceticism; see *EI*, 4:1239. *EI²*, 11:559.

11 Zabīdī says that this is the first stage, or the true beginning, of the mystic's path.

12 "Zāwiya," see *EI*, 4:1220ff. *EI²*, 11:466.

13 "Farāʾiḍ" (pl.), "farḍ," see *EI*, 2:61; *EI²*, 2:783. Zabīdī, *Itḥāf*, 1:144.

14 "Rawātib" (pl.), supererogatory acts of worship which may precede and follow the prescribed prayers; see *EI*, 3:1129. *EI²*, "rātib," 8:459. See also Ghazālī, trans. Calverley, *Worship in Islam*, pp. 21, 186ff.

effaced from the heart and there remains present in it naught save the ideal meaning which is, as it were, adhering to and inseparable from the heart.

To attain to this point is a matter of his choice; so too is the prolonging of this condition by warding off the suggestions of Satan. Not by his choice, however, can he procure the gift of the mercy of God, the Exalted. By what he has done thus far he has exposed himself to the breezes of God's mercy, and it only remains for him to wait for such mercy as God may grant to him, even as He has, in this way, given His mercy to the prophets and saints. Upon doing this, if his desire is sincere, his intention pure, and his perseverance good, and if his lusts do not draw him aside nor the suggestions of the self (*ḥadīth al-nafs*)[15] engross him with the ties of this present world, there will shine forth the gleams of reality into his heart. In its beginning this will be like a blinding flash of lightning. It is not continuous but it returns, although it may delay. If it returns it may continue, and it may be but a flash. If it continues it may be for a longer or shorter time. These different types may appear, the one succeeding the other, or they may be limited to one sort only. The stages (*manāzil*) of the saints of God, the Exalted, in this are unlimited, even as the superiority of their nature and moral characteristics is not to be reckoned. So this way goes back to an absolute purifying and clarifying and brightening of the heart on your part, and then only to make ready and wait in expectation.

The speculative theologians (*nuẓẓār*) and those whose opinions deserve consideration have not denied the fact that this way does exist, that it is a possibility, and that it does, in rare instances, lead to the desired end. Indeed this way has been that of most prophets and saints. But they consider it a difficult way, and think it slow in bearing fruit, and feel that the fulfilment of all of its conditions is very improbable. They claim that to blot out all ties to this extent is practically impossible. If it does happen for a moment, its continuation is even more difficult, since the slightest evil prompting or involuntary suggestion disturbs the heart.

15 The *ḥadīth al-nafs* is equivalent to *al-khāṭir al-nafsī* (see page xxx). See Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī, *al-Qushayri's Epistle on Sufism*, trans. Alexander Knysh (Reading, UK: Garnet Publishing, 2007), pp. 106–7. See also ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār al-tanzīl wa asrār al-taʾwīl*, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1846–8), on Qurʾān 50:15. It is the lightest type of sin, and according to some, is not even to be reckoned as sin on the day of judgment. See *EI*, 2:927a. See also chapter 13 of the present work.

The Prophet ﷺ said, "The heart of the believer is more unsteady than a cooking pot as it boils."[16] He, may the best blessings and peace be upon him, also said, "The heart of the believer is between two of the fingers of the Merciful." During such strenuous effort the physical constitution may be disordered, the intellect confused, and the body may suffer. If progress in the discipline and improvement of the soul is not made by means of the realities of the sciences, then the heart is ensnared with corrupt imaginings in which the soul trusts for a long time before they come to an end; and one may live out his appointed time without succeeding. Many a Sufi has traveled this way and continued to hold a single visionary [state] for twenty years, whereas if he had mastered knowledge beforehand, the point of confusion in his vision (*khayāl*) would have been opened up to him at once. So to busy one's self in the path of learning is a surer and easier means of attaining the aim. They claim that it is as though a man left off the study of jurisprudence (*fiqh*),[17] asserting, "The Prophet ﷺ did not study it and he became one who understood the divine law by means of prophetic and general inspiration without any repetition or application, and perhaps discipline of the soul and steadfastness will bring me finally to that goal." Whoever thinks this wrongs himself and wastes his life. Nay, rather, he is like one who gives up the way of gain through farming, hoping to chance upon some treasure. The latter is indeed possible, but extremely unlikely. So too [in the matter of gaining knowledge]. They say, "It is first of all necessary to attain to that which the learned have achieved and to understand what they said. Then after that there is no harm in expectantly waiting for that which has not been disclosed to the other learned men, and it may be that this will be disclosed afterwards through strenuous effort."



16 An authentic *ḥadīth* quoted by Aḥmad from Miqdād b. al-Aswad.

17 "Fiqh," *EI*, 2:101ff. *EI*², 2:886.

Chapter 9

An Exposition of the Difference in Rank between the Two Positions by a Tangible Example

Know that the wonders of the heart are outside the realm of things perceived through the senses (*mudrakāt al-ḥawāss*),[1] for the heart is also beyond sense perception. The understandings are too weak to grasp, except by means of a tangible example, that which is not perceived through the senses. So we shall explain this to people of weak understanding by means of two examples.

For the first illustration let us suppose that a reservoir is dug in the earth, into which the water can be conducted from the surface above through streams which empty into it. The bed of the reservoir may also be dug up and the dirt removed from it until the fountain of pure water is reached, and then the water bursts forth from the bottom of the reservoir. This water is purer and more constant, and perhaps more copious and abundant. The heart then is like the reservoir and knowledge like the water. The five external senses are like the streams. Knowledge may possibly be conducted to the heart by means of the streams of the senses and the consideration of things observed until it is thus filled with knowledge. It is also possible to stop up these streams [from flowing into] it by solitude and seclusion and averting the eyes from seeing, and then to resolve in the depths of the heart to purify it and remove from it the layers of veils until the fountain of knowledge bursts forth from within it.

1 *Ḥawāss*, external senses. See Weliur-Rahman, "The Psychology of Ibn-i-Sina," pp. 344–51.

But if you say, "How can knowledge burst forth from the heart itself while it is destitute of it," know that this is one of the wonders of the heart's secrets. It is not permissible to deal with it in the knowledge of proper conduct (*ʿilm al-muʿāmala*). This much, however, can be mentioned, that the real natures of things are written down in the Preserved Tablet (*al-lawḥ al-maḥfūẓ*), and indeed in the hearts of the angels who are brought near [to God].

For just as an architect draws plans for buildings on blank paper and then brings them into actuality in accordance with that archetype (*nuskha*), thus the Creator of the heavens and the earth wrote an archetype of the world from beginning to end upon the Preserved Tablet, and then brought it into actuality in accordance with that archetype.

From the world which has been brought into actuality in the image [of the archetype] there is transmitted to the external senses and the retentive imagination (*khayāl*)[2] still another image. For whoever looks at the sky and the earth and then closes his eyes, sees in his imagination the image of the sky and the earth, so that it is as though he were looking at them; and were the sky and the earth annihilated and he himself remained, he would find within himself the image[3] of the sky and the earth as though he were beholding them and looking at them.

Then from his imagination an effect is transmitted to the heart, so that there is represented in it the real natures of things that have entered into sensation and imagination. The representation in the heart corresponds to the world that is represented in the imagination, which in turn corresponds to the world as it exists in itself, external to the imagination and heart of man. This existing world corresponds to the archetype existing in the Preserved Tablet.

Thus the world has four degrees of existence.[4] There is existence in the Preserved Tablet; this is prior to its corporeal (*jismānī*) existence. Its

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2 *Khayāl*, the power to preserve the forms of sensibles perceived by the common sense after the objects themselves have been removed. It is a storehouse for the common sense, placed in the back part of the front ventricle of the brain, Jurjānī, *al-Taʿrīfāt*, p. 107. See also Wolfson, "Internal Senses," p. 100n.; Weliur-Rahman, "The Psychology of Ibn-i-Sina," p. 353.

3 Editor's note: here, Imam al-Ghazālī uses the word *ṣūra*, usually translated as form.

4 Cf. Ibn Sīnā's three modes of existence. Things are *ante res*, in the mind of God; *in rebus*, natural existence together with its accidents; and *post res*, as conceived by the human intellect. Ueberweg, *Philosophy*, 1:413. Ghazālī has merely subdivided

real (*ḥaqīqī*) existence follows this, and it is followed in turn by its imaginative (*khayālī*) existence,[5] by which I mean the existence of its image in the imagination. Its imaginative existence is followed by its intellectual existence, by which I mean the existence of its image within the heart. Some of these [orders of] being are immaterial (*rūḥāniyya*) and some [are] corporeal. Of the immaterial, some are more immaterial in their [order of] being than others. This is a kindness (*luṭf*) coming from the divine wisdom; for God has made the pupil of your eye in such a way that, in spite of its smallness, there is pictured within it the image of the world, the heavens and the earth, with all their widespread extent. Then it goes on from existence in the realm of sensation to existence in the imagination, and from it to existence in the heart. For you can never apprehend anything save that which has reached you; and were it not that He has placed an image (*mithāl*)[6] of the whole world within your very being you would have no knowledge of that which is apart from yourself. Glory belongs unto Him who has ordered these wonders in the heart and eye, and then blinded the heart and eye to the perception of them so that the hearts of the majority of creatures have become ignorant of themselves and their wonders.

Let us now go back to intended purpose and say, "It is conceivable that the real nature of the world might be represented in the heart, its mental image coming now from the senses and again from the Preserved Tablet; even as it is conceivable that the image of the sun should be represented in the eye, coming now from looking directly at it, and again from looking at the water on which the sun shines which reproduces its image." So whenever the veils are lifted between the heart and the Preserved Tablet, the heart sees the things which are therein, and knowledge bursts forth into it therefrom, so that it does not have to acquire its knowledge through the avenues of the senses. This is like the bursting forth of water from the depths of the earth. Whenever the heart becomes occupied with things

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this third division, *post res*, into imaginative and intellectual existence. In this chain of modes of existence we see some of the influence of Neoplatonism on Arabic philosophy.

5 Editor's note: On the imagination, see William Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989).

6 Cf. the Aristotelian idea of the human soul as a microcosm, uniting in itself all the faculties of the other orders of animate existence and distinguished by *nous*. Ueberweg, *Philosophy*, 1:168.

in the imagination derived from sensibles (*maḥsūsāt*), this veils it from examining the Preserved Tablet, just as when water is collected from streams [into a reservoir]; it is thereby prevented from bursting forth from the earth; or just as he who looks into the water that reproduces the image of the sun is not looking at the sun itself.

Thus the heart has two doors.[7] One door opens toward the world of spirits (*ʿālam al-malakūt*), which is the Preserved Tablet and the world of the angels (*ʿālam al-malāʾika*). The other door opens toward the five external senses that are tethered to the visible material world. This visible world also resembles the world of spirits to a certain extent. Now the fact that the door of the heart is opened to the acquisition of knowledge through the senses is a thing you understand. But regarding its door that opens to the world of spirits and [is able to] see the Preserved Tablet, you have certain knowledge through meditating upon the wonders of dream-visions (*ruʾyā*) and the heart's observation in sleep of what will be in the future or what was in the past, without any acquisition on the part of the senses.

That door, however, is opened only to one who devotes himself exclusively to the remembrance of God, the Exalted. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Men of a single [thought] have taken the lead."[8] He was asked, O Messenger of God, "Who are they?" He answered, "Those who are devoted to the remembrance of God, the Exalted, for this remembrance (*dhikr*) of theirs has put away from them their load of sin and they come to the resurrection unburdened."[9] Then he described them by relating the statement of God, the Exalted, "Then I shall draw near with my face toward them. Do you think that anyone knows what thing I desire to bestow upon him toward whom I turn my face?" Then He, the Exalted, said, "The first thing I give

7 Man's potential intelligence is made actual from two directions: divine inspiration, and reasoning and argumentation. This was taught by Ibn Sīnā (Weliur-Rahman, "The Psychology of Ibn-i-Sina," pp. 356ff.); Ueberweg, *Philosophy*, 1:412ff.; Brett, *Psychology*, 2:51, 57), and further developed by Ghazālī, who added Sufi elements as we find here. The soul of man, or his heart, is between sense perception and divine illumination and is influenced by them both, in the sense that both are sources of knowledge. This is similar to what Ghazālī has already told us of man's being between the angel and the demon, in the sense of being influenced by them both in the sphere of conduct.

8 This first part is an authentic *ḥadīth* given by Muslim from Abū Hurayra.

9 This latter part, which begins 'for this remembrance' and so on, is a weak addition. Wensinck, *Handbook*, p. 97a.

them is that I cast light into their hearts and they give tidings of me even as I give tidings of them."[10] The entrance for these tidings is the inner door.

So this is the difference between the knowledge of the prophets and saints and that of the learned and the philosophers (*ḥukumā*ʾ): the knowledge of the former comes from within the heart through the door that is opened toward the world of spirits, whereas the knowledge of the philosophers[11] comes through the doors of the senses that open to the material world. The wonders of the world of the heart and its wavering between the visible and invisible worlds cannot be fully dealt with in a [study of the] knowledge of proper conduct. But this is an example that will teach you the difference of the entrance of the two [kinds of] knowledge.

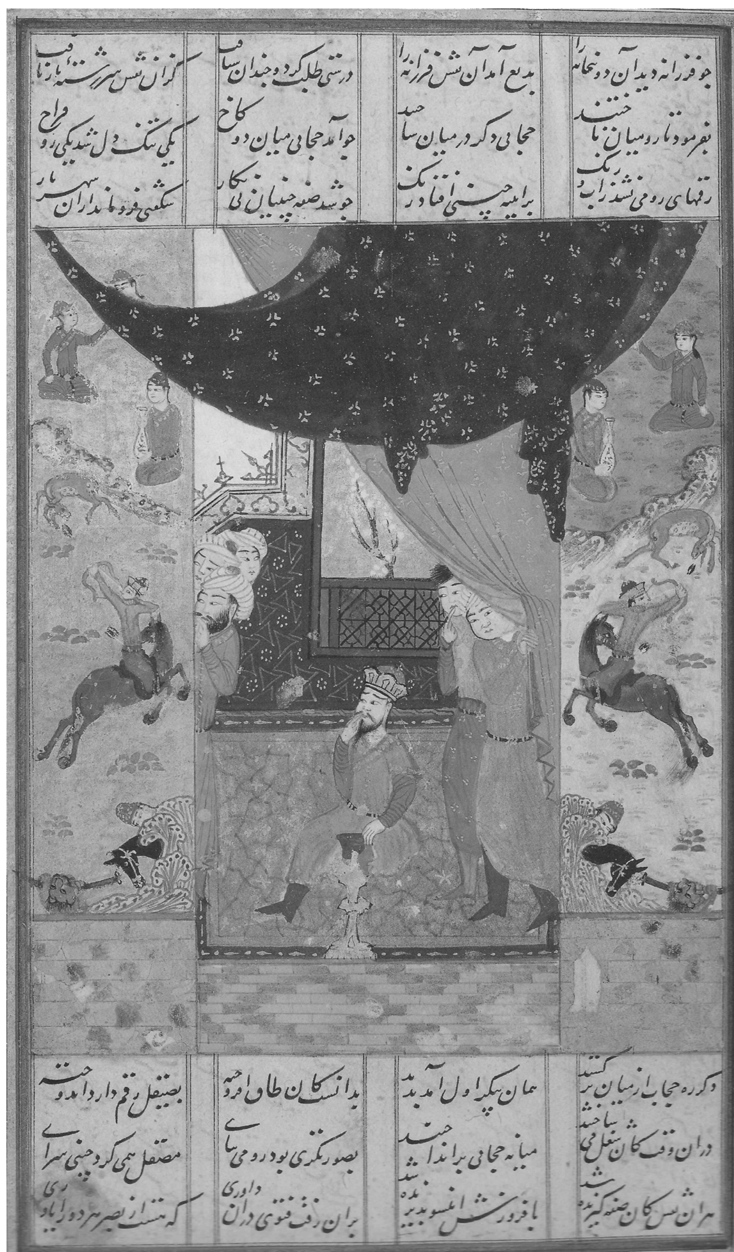
The second example will explain to you the difference between the two types of action, by which I mean the action of the learned and that of the saints. The learned work to acquire knowledge itself and gather it into the heart, but the saints among the Sufis labor only [with the goal of] polishing, cleansing, clarifying, and brightening the heart.

The story is told that once the Chinese[12] and the Byzantines (Rūm) vied with one another before a certain king as to the beauty of their workmanship in decorating and painting. So the king decided to give over to them a portico so that the Chinese might decorate one side of it and the Byzantines the other side; and to let a curtain hang down between them so as to prevent either group from looking at the other. And he did so. The Byzantines gathered together countless strange colors, but the Chinese entered without any color at all and began to polish their side and to brighten it. When the Byzantines had finished, the Chinese claimed that they had finished also. The king was astonished at their statement and the way in which they had finished the decorating without any color at all. So they were asked, "How have you finished the work without any color?" They replied, "You are not responsible for us; lift the veil." So they lifted it, and behold on their side there shone forth the wonders of the Byzantine skill with added illumination and dazzling brilliance, since that side had

10 A "ḥadīth qudsī," see *EI*, 2:190b, 4:336a; *EI*², 3:28. I do not find its source.

11 Editor's note: the Cairo text has *ḥikma* (wisdom), Zabīdī (7:254) has *ḥukamā*ʾ, as used above.

12 Zabīdī gives a proverb which says that wisdom descended (in special power) upon three bodily members: the brain of the Greek, the hand of the Chinese, and the tongue of the Arab. See following page for painting representing the contest.



A painting of the contest that takes place between the Chinese and the Byzantines. (From a manuscript of Niẓāmī, *Khamsa,* Shiraz, 1449–50, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 13.228.3, fol. 332r.).

Let us then limit ourselves to this brief mention of the wonders of the heart, for to undertake it in complete detail is not appropriate for [a discussion of] the knowledge of proper conduct (*muʿāmala*). But we have mentioned what is needed in order to know the depths and secrets of the knowledge of proper conduct, in order to benefit the one who is not satisfied with the external, nor content to take the shell instead of the kernel, but longs to have a detailed knowledge of the true nature of causes. In what we have mentioned he will find that which, if God wills, will both suffice and convince. God is Lord of success.[12]

The *Book of the Marvels of the Heart* is complete, and to God be praise and gratitude. It is followed by the *Book of Disciplining the Soul and Refining the Character*.

Praise be to God alone, and may
His blessing be upon
every chosen
servant.



12 Zabīdī omits all that follows; MSS have slightly varying endings.

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Index

G

H

I

J

K

Colophon



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أَلَا بِذِكْرِ ٱللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ ٱلْقُلُوبُ

Verily in the remembrance of God
do hearts find tranquility

Qurʾān 13:28